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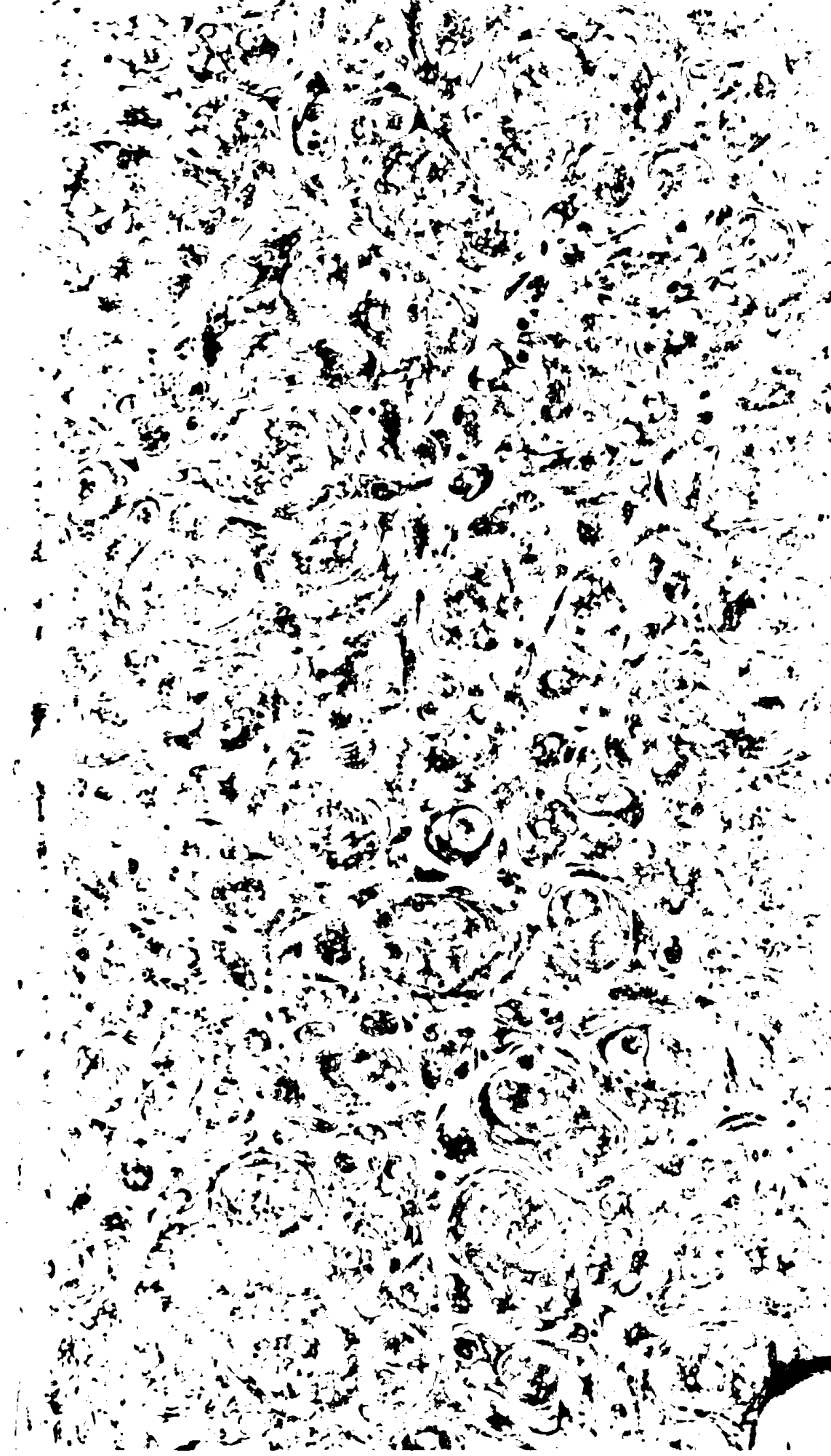


MESSI

Saturday

May 20 th

1752

W. Hilton del
Pub by J. Walker, Paternoster Row, & J. Harris St. Paul's Church Yard.
E. Rumford Sculp

THE MESSIAH,

A SACRED POEM

from

The German

of

KLOPSTOCK.

Vol. 1.

Joseph & Nicodemus having spread out the linen and Aromatics, [illegible] took the Corpse from the Cross &c. Book 15

London:

Published by J. Walker, Paternoster Row & J. Harris, St. Pauls Church Yard.

THE

MESSIAH:

From the German of

KLOPSTOCK.

THE

FIRST SIXTEEN BOOKS BY MRS. COLLYER,

AND THE

THREE LAST BY MRS. MEEKE.

To which is prefixed,

An Introduction on Divine Poetry.

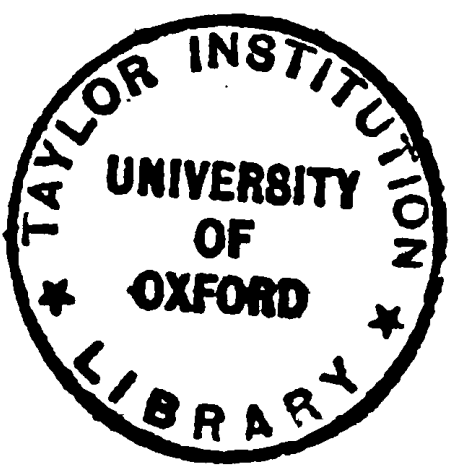
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

For J. Walker;
J. Johnson and Co.; J. Richardson; R. Faulder and Son; F. C. and J. Rivington; Vernor, Hood, and Sharpe; R. Lea; J. Nunn; J. Cuthell; E. Jeffery; A. K. Newman and Co.; Lackington, Allen, and Co.; Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown; Cadell and Davies; Wilkie and Robinson; J. Booker; Black, Parry, and Kingsbury; Sherwood, Neely, and Jones; J. Asperne; R. Scholey; and J. Harris.

1811.



Lane, Darling, and Co., Leadenhall-street.

ON DIVINE POETRY.

THE public have a right to expect that the painter, who submits his picture to their judgment, should hang it up, and go away in silence. This rule I have carefully observed, and, mingling with the spectators, have held my peace, and improved by their observations. Still would I proceed in the same manner, and only take aside such of the spectators as are willing to hear me, and place them in a situation, in which, I imagine, they will be enabled to view pieces of this kind in a proper point of view. My design is not here confined to the Messiah, but to sacred poetry in general.

I am very sensible that, by this means, I expose myself to double danger; first, by slightly touching a subject that would require a volume, and by boldly reminding my judges of what they have a right to expect from those who undertake to give others a more sublime view of religion. But notwithstanding this, and in spite of my aversion to engaging in works of criticism, the hopes of being of use to some, and of giving pleasure to others, have enabled me to surmount every difficulty. But, before I enter upon this subject, it seems previously necessary to consider, whether it be allowable for poets to form their plans upon religious subjects. This may be doubted by some truly pious Christians; I shall therefore answer it with that respect which I shall always entertain for every good and upright mind.

That part of revelation which relates to facts, chiefly consists of outlines that were once filled up, and formed great and finished pictures. These beautiful outlines the poet carefully studies, and adds those bold touches, and lively colourings, which he imagines most suitable to the design. Thus the whole, though regulated by the outlines, is, in a great measure, a picture formed from the imagination of the poet. Yet in this he does no more than others, who draw different consequences from the unhistorical passages of revelation; and the conduct of both is equally allowable.

But others may, for a still more tender regard for religion, object, that nothing foreign should ever be mixed with divine revelation, lest the poet, by the force of his enchanting art, should make us forget that we are reading a work of imagination; and that, in an affair of such infinite importance as religion, it is not allowable to mislead men, by making them mistake fictions for realities. To those who seriously make this objection, I answer, The circumstances which, either from the fervour of the heart, or the warmth of imagination, are, with all the appearance of truth, added to the history, can never be prejudicial to the cause of virtue; for, if ever they are capable of being so, they must plainly appear fictitious, and not founded in truth and nature.

If then it be allowable for the poet to unfold and illustrate what is taught by revelation, it may be farther asked, Under what circumstances he may be permitted to make use of materials drawn from religion? To this I answer, that these circumstances are determined by nothing less than the end and design of religion itself. In sacred poetry, a part of the plan and superstructure must depend on the genius and taste of the poet; but another, and perhaps the most essential, must arise from his religious turn of mind. His being well acquainted with the nature of religion in general, and his having thoroughly studied all its doctrines, are not sufficient; its truths must also be deeply impressed on his heart. But before I enlarge on these sentiments, and shew the numerous moral effects that flow from them, it is proper to bestow a few reflections on the genius and taste every person should possess, who attempts to distinguish himself in sacred poetry.

Some of my readers are well acquainted with the beauties of poetry, and know the various moral views it is capable of answering; views which it ought always to have, though it is often without them. They know what the world, from the most enlightened judge, down to the lowest imitator, expect from the sublimer kinds of poetry. They who have read, and been accustomed to reflection, hold as infallible, not the judgment of hasty criticism, but that of the public, confirmed by time; and

are convinced that what men commonly call criticism, is often only ignorance, positiveness, partiality, and fashion. They are persuaded, that more just and perfect rules of writing may be learnt from a few lines of Virgil, or from those who deserve to be ranked with him, than from all the books of criticism in the world.

But there are other readers who equally deserve our respect, that know little of all this, how much soever they may deserve to know it. These are they who are guided only by the pure unbiassed sentiments of nature and a good heart. As they are the most numerous, the author of a sacred poem must particularly write for them; and it is for their sakes I make the few following remarks on the most sublime kind of poetry, in order to shew how it should be employed on religious subjects. What I shall offer on this head, shall be reduced to the following short propositions:—

A piece of sublime poetry is a work of genius, in which strokes of wit are to be sparingly used.

There are master-pieces of wit that neither reach the heart, nor flow from it; but a genius without the tender feelings of the heart is very imperfect.

The highest and utmost effect of genius, is to move the whole soul. We may here arise, by gradual steps, to stronger and still stronger sensations. This is the grand theatre of the sublime.

Whoever thinks there is but little difference between causing gentle emotions in the soul, and strongly agitating all its powers, has too mean an idea of that immortal substance.

He who would thus move the soul, must, with the finger of harmony, touch every string, with a force suited to the nature of each; for the smallest error is here perceived. He who duly considers this, will often repent his labour in writing.

However the successful poet produces sensations that can neither be raised by the strongest philosophic conviction, nor yet by any other species of poetry—sensations that, from the strength and duration of their impressions, resemble those we receive from the living examples of the most illustrious of mankind.

Sublime poetry is utterly incapable of corrupting the heart, by dazzling representations that lead to vice; no sooner does it attempt this, than it changes its very nature: for mankind, however debased, can never feel all the powers of the soul moved at once, by what is not strictly virtuous.

The ultimate end of sublime poetry, and the true mark of its value, is moral beauty. This is alone sufficient to charm and animate the soul. The divine poet must raise us above all narrow, mean, and contracted views, and draw us strongly with a rapturous stream. He must deeply impress on our minds the idea of our immortality, and that we are capable of arriving, even in this life, at a very high degree of virtue and intellectual happiness. The man who is raised to this height, is the only qualified reader, and competent judge of divine poetry.

Man may here, even without a revelation, make great advances. Homer, setting aside his mythology, which was not his own invention, abounds with excellent moral precepts. But when divine revelation becomes our guide, we ascend from a hill that rises upon the top of a mountain.

Young's Night Thoughts is, perhaps, a work that has the merit of having fewer faults than any other. If we take from him what he says as a Christian, Socrates remains: but how does the Christian rise above Socrates!

The following remarks will not, perhaps, be superfluous, with respect to the observation I have still to offer on the nature of divine poetry.

We attribute to the soul, as its higher faculties, judgment, imagination, and volition; all which the poet must address in performances of a sublime nature.

He must place before the judgment such truths as most deserve to be known, and which are alone, or, at least, best felt and understood, by the honest and upright mind.

To the imagination he must oftener paint those objects that compose the great and awful beauties of nature, than such as only gently sooth the soul; and in drawing these he will best succeed when, from the fire of his own imagination, he feels the ideas he would excite.

And, to influence the will, which is a leading power

of the soul, he will introduce such sentiments as raise, expand, and ennoble the heart.

His design is more extensive than awaking a single passion, while the rest are lulled to sleep. He is not contented with affording his readers a most pleasing amusement, and decoying us into an indolent approbation; but, by a master-piece of skill, he lays before us views, at which, by a sudden and powerful touch, he makes us cry out with joy, stand immoveably fixed in astonishment, or filled with grief and terror, turn pale, tremble, and weep.

A critic will scarce venture to investigate the causes that produce such sudden and powerful effects—causes and effects so variously delicate, and which have such manifold relations to each other, that it is infinitely difficult justly to unravel them; and were this even done, none but a sagacious reader, of a peculiar taste, would be able to understand it. This the poet alone knows; he knows still more; but should he increase his knowledge, it would not add to his poetic abilities. However this unravelling of the clew will lead us through the whole labyrinth, and though from the fineness of the thread we are exposed to continual danger of mistakes, we shall still endeavour to follow it.

The most difficult point is for both the author and reader of a large sacred poem fully to comprehend, and form a true judgment of the whole plan. It is here essentially necessary for the poet to conduct his work with simplicity, and to connect it with variety, in an agreeable manner, to one great end: to give a certain sublimity to the reigning idea of the poem: to reach the just limits of daring flights of invention, without going beyond them: to introduce new characters, so great and amiable, that it shall appear strange they should be still new: to make the principal occurrences go hand in hand with the reader, and the episodes attend on the main design; bearing a near, but yet a subordinate relation to it, and manifestly forming a part of its train. There is also a certain order required in the construction of the plan, in which, art, lying covered in its most secret ambush, produces the more powerful effects, in proportion

as it is more concealed. This secret order should be observed in the connection and proper change of those scenes in which either truth, imagination, or the passions, are chiefly to preside; and these scenes are to introduce, to support, or to raise each other, so as to add to the force, the dignity, the beauty and harmony of the whole. Thus when the poet in some important part of his work designs strongly to affect the mind, he will perhaps proceed unobserved in the following manner. If he would have all this performed by the plan, he will say, in order strongly to affect the mind, I must gradually rise, that every step may prepare for what is to follow. In order to fill my readers with a sorrow mixed with silent astonishment, I must insensibly encompass them with sorrowful images. I must first remind them of certain truths that open the soul to the reception of the last, and most powerful impressions, and after having for some time passed by silent tombs, still strewed with flowers, I shall come to the deep and open grave, filled with the dead. Were I abruptly to bring them thither, they would be rather stunned than filled with strong sensations. These preparations belong to my plan, and therefore I must thus arrange them.

The sublime, when, in this manner, carried to its full maturity and perfection, agitates the whole soul, and has the greatest effect on him who, being accustomed to lofty ideas, seldom wonders; but when he does, is filled with higher admiration than little minds are capable of feeling: while souls of a second order are so affected by certain strokes, that they cannot be so properly said to feel as to shudder. The powers of the soul act in such harmony, that, if I may use the expression, they continually flow into each other, and one being powerfully struck, the sensation is communicated to all. The poet raises an image: he gives it such propriety, that it charms the understanding; and besides, adds certain touches that reach the heart. Simple truths, which only seem fit to affect the judgment, in his hands assume the pleasing appearance of images, adorned with such dignity and sublimity, that they raise the noblest affections of the mind, which beam out, and become virtues. It is the heart that is here affected, and how suddenly does it kindle

into a flame! the whole soul becomes expanded, the imagination is awakened, and all our ideas exalted and enlarged. For though some passions disturb the powers of thought, yet, in general, the heart, on being strongly moved, excites just, sublime, and noble ideas. Hence arise new sources of harmony in the soul, new thoughts, new sensations, new designs, and new resolutions.

But to this elevation frequently adheres a certain degree of mediocrity. We feel it, and long to rise higher: the soul is not satisfied; it requires still more: religion is wanting, which is alone capable of filling and satisfying its most capacious desires: and we were yet only in the sphere where we ourselves have discovered truth. Happy is he whose knowledge, whose ideas and sensations, are extensive; but how much happier is the man who has begun to understand and feel the sublime truths of religion!

Revealed religion may be compared to an human being, full of life, health, and vigour, though in many religious tracts, of great use in their kind, it appears no more than a mere skeleton. The poet aspires to imitate revelation, as he endeavours to imitate nature: but though revelation follows nature in moving the heart, yet the additional means it uses to render us more virtuous and happy, are far more sublime. Sacred poetry demands a much nobler theatre, and is governed by the plan of revelation. But a poem built on a particular history of the Old Testament, should be constructed on a different plan from one that is connected with the essence and whole of religion. In sacred poetry, the majestic dignity, both of the characters and the actions, constitute, perhaps, its greatest difficulties; and many arguments may be brought against introducing God as speaking at all. In revelation, he is represented speaking in a twofold manner: sometimes he uses very concise language, especially under his majestic character of Creator and Judge of the world; but he is more frequently introduced shewing mankind the causes of his judgments, and the conditions of obtaining his favour. This dignity and propriety should also be preserved in those images by which the poet represents the actions

of God, and he should carefully keep close to revelation in such passages as are peculiarly sacred. Even the under characters in a divine poem must have a suitable dignity: for such characters and actions as properly claim a place in other epic poems, are justly excluded those of a sacred nature.

The historics contained in the Bible, especially those that have no relation to the essential parts of religion, mention only a few of the great events, while the rest must ever be concealed from us, at least in this world; and some of those we are favoured with, are told in so concise a manner, that we must necessarily form in our minds some idea of the circumstances, before we can fully understand them; and this affords ground for probable fiction in general. Certain truths, not necessary to be known in this life, are also revealed in such a manner, that they appear like hints of farther truths to be discovered by reflection; and such discoveries are not only within the province of sacred poetry, but even fictions may be founded upon them. Some critics are very liberal in permitting poets, where history is deficient, to build on tradition and conjecture: but the sacred poet must be more cautious than others, and take particular care not to introduce any thing contrary to the truth, and to feign nothing unworthy of it.

The divine revelation consists of precepts, events, and prophecies, intermixed with moral truths. Though these are, in general, delivered pretty clearly, there are many passages that require deep meditation. But it is very extraordinary, that interpreters should err in giving the sense of those passages that are clear and plain, no less than in those that are obstruse and difficult. I do not here call conjecture error; for where a passage of scripture calls for it, we may certainly be allowed to offer our conjectures, especially if this be done with modesty. But with regard to probability and certainty, the sacred poet should make it a rule to deliver, in their full force, such revealed moral truths as particularly rise above those that are merely philosophical. Revelation, though solemn and sublime, has nothing in it that appears morose and gloomy: it is therefore calculated to inspire a plea-

sing and cheerful piety. Again, some sacred transactions do not require the embellishments of fancy, while others seem to demand it; as for instance, the following passage: "Many bodies of the saints that slept, arose after his resurrection, and came into the city, and appeared unto many."

Where application to prophecy is necessary, the poet should follow the general rule observed by the interpreters of Scripture, and deliver the accomplishment in the same manner as that in which the prophets foretold it. Mysteries should be delivered with the greatest simplicity, except where they relate to historical facts, and in all those that have a relation to the redemption of man, the poet should be extremely cautious not to deviate from revelation.

When I observed, that a poet should imitate revelation as he would imitate nature, I did not mean in the style and diction; but in the principal plan of religion, the grand and wonderful occurrences already past, and the still more wonderful yet to come; in the edifying truths, the striking dignity, the amazing sublimity of revelation, joined with the most amiable simplicity, the most earnest seriousness, and the most ardent love: these, and the like beauties of revelation, as far as the powers of the human mind can reach, should be carefully imitated. This is very different from imitating the style of the prophets in their master-pieces of eloquence, and energy of expression.

The Greeks, the Romans, and the French, have all their short golden age of polite literature; and I do not know why we have not given one to the English: they have long had master-pieces, and these have not ceased with Glover. The golden age of the Hebrews is of much longer duration, as it begins with Moses, or Job; and among them we find two different kinds of style; the eastern style in general, and that of revelation.

The higher characters which are beyond the sphere of the visible creation, are brought into it by revelation, and must be drawn in a manner suitable to human conception. For this there are sufficient grounds, as it is probable that finite spirits, particularly employed in the

visible world, have some kind of corporeal vehicles; and that those employed in administering to the redemption of man, should be invested with etherial bodies, in some degree resembling that of the Redeemer. The sacred poet has here a new scene opened to his imagination, and may advance nearer to his great end, by giving such touches to his characters, as at once employ the understanding, and affect the heart. Simplicity and sublimity must add the finishing strokes.

What astonishing truths does revelation offer to the mind! how do they restore the soul to her native sublimity! and how great is their variety! Each branch affords a shade, under which the weary traveller may repose, and inhale the breath of life. "Be ye perfect, as your Father who is in Heaven is perfect," says the great Founder of our religion. When the poet would not deliver such exhortations in vain, he must express them in such a manner as at once to affect both the judgment and the heart.

In every species of oratory, the highest view of the master, and the effect expected by the hearer, is giving strong emotions to the soul. Doing this by the force of religion, is a new species of the sublime, which without revelation would be involved in clouds. Here both the poet and his reader may certainly know whether they are Christians; for he can be nothing less who here moves our whole souls; nor he who finds himself thus moved: for how shall a poet of the greatest genius, without feeling the strong impressions of religion, without an upright heart, glowing with all the fervour of piety, produce in our minds the most lively and devout sensations?

Where the pretended Freethinker, and the Christian who only understands half of his religion, see only a spacious heap of ruins, the true Christian beholds a magnificent temple. And how can the former see more than ruins, when a small mistake in the view, to his perverted sight, changes magnificence into confusion? It requires more than the knowledge of mythology to understand and feel the beauties of Homer, and much more than philosophy to relish the sublime graces of revelation.

THE

MESSIAH.

BOOK I.

The Argument.

The Messiah, withdrawing from the multitude, ascends the mount of Olives; and, in a solemn prayer, repeats his promise to undertake the redemption of mankind. He sends Gabriel to present his petitions to the Most High. The seraph proceeds through a path illuminated by suns; and, reaching Heaven, hears a song of praise. Eloa meets Gabriel, and conducts him to the altar of the Messiah; upon which he offers incense. The omnipotent Father at length opens with his thunders the holy sanctuary. A discourse between Eloa and Urim, on the prophetic visions seen in that sacred place. God speaks. Eloa proclaims his more particular orders. Gabriel is sent to the angels of the earth, and to those of the sun. He descends to the earth, and finds the Messiah asleep, addresses him, and then proceeds to the guardian angels of the earth, who reside in its centre; where he finds the souls of infants, which are there prepared for Heaven. Thence he ascends to the sun; where he sees the souls of the patriarchs, with Uriel, the angel of that orb.

THE

MESSIAH.

BOOK I.

INSPIR'D by thine immortality, rise my soul, and sing the honours of thy great Redeemer: honours obtain'd in hard adversity's rough school—obtain'd by suffering for the sins and woes of others, himself sinless. Recount, with humble gratitude, those guiltless sufferings, the bitter consequences of love to man's degenerate race. In vain Satan rag'd against the Lord's Anointed: in vain Judea set herself against him; he accomplish'd, in his humanity, the great work of our redemption.

O work divine, completely known only to the omnipresent God! May the muse presume, with awful distance, to penetrate the sacred veil that surrounds thee, and feeble man attempt thy praise! Can a weak mortal explain thy heights, thy depths? Assist me, O thou divine Spirit! before whom I suppliant bow; lead and inspire me, that full of rapture—full of thee, I may penetrate the depths profound of heavenly wisdom; contemplate the glorious plan of man's redemption, through the obscurity of ages past, and enlighten'd by thy revelations, in exalted strains, display the great Messiah's love to Adam's ruin'd race.

Rejoice, ye sons of earth, in the honour bestow'd on man. He who was before all worlds: he, by whom all things in this visible creation were made, came down to earth as your Redeemer! Hear and join my song, ye noble few, ye favourites of the amiable Mediator; who, inspir'd by his example, with filial love, with devout piety, tread the path of life, and with humble hope, wait

for the rich rewards of virtue, when crown'd with glory, and array'd in righteousness, he again shall descend, and come to judge the world.

Near Jerusalem, once the city where God display'd his grace; once the nurse of the holy prophets, though she had now thrown away the crown of high election, and was become an altar of blood, shed by murderers; the divine Messiah withdrew from the multitude, and sought retirement. He conceal'd himself from a people, who, though they had paid him honours, strewing his path with branches of palm, and shouting forth his praises in loud hosannas, receiv'd him not with that singleness of heart that is pleasing to the all-piercing eye of God. Looking for a temporal king, array'd in earthly glories, and the pageantry of mortals, they set at nought God's great Vicegerent: to see their Saviour under the humble form of the son of a carpenter, their eye was too dim, their faith too weak. From Heaven God himself had descended, and a mighty voice proclaiming, I have glorify'd my Son, and will again glorify him, announc'd the present Deity. But blinded by their lusts, they despised his mission, and would not accept him as the Messiah, whose coming was foretold by the holy prophets. From these, slow of heart, Jesus conceal'd himself.

On the side where the sun first gilds Jerusalem with his beams, rises a mountain, whose top the holy Mediator had often honour'd with his presence, when, during the solitary night, he, wakeful, spent his hours in fervent prayer. Thither he now went to offer up his supplications to the eternal Father, and once more to declare his full, his free resolution to sanctify the favour'd sons of men. John, his beloved disciple, follow'd him as far as the grottos, where stood the tombs of the prophets, intending to watch the tedious night with his divine friend; but to the summit of the mountain Jesus ascended alone. Around him glimmer'd the distant light of the sacrifices, flaming, to appease the Deity, on high Moria; where, ignorant of the salvation offer'd them by the divine Messenger of God, they shed the blood of bulls and of goats,

as an attonement for the sins of the people. Vain oblations, without renovation of heart, and amendment of life! Here he rested, where the olive spreads her refreshing shade, and gentle breezes hover'd round him. The angel given the Messiah, as his ministering spirit, Gabriel his heavenly name, now stood between two perfume-breathing cedars, contemplating on the salvation of man, and the triumphs of eternity. Jesus pass'd him. Gabriel knew that the time of man's redemption was at hand, and his mind was full of holy rapture, when he thus address'd the Messiah; Wilt thou, O divine Saviour of men! wilt thou again spend the lonesome night in prayer? Or do thy weary limbs demand repose? Here the cedar stretches forth her verdant arms to shelter thee; and here the fragrant shrubs breathe their sweets. Yonder grows soft moss in a cool soil. Shall I of that prepare a couch on which thou may'st rest thy sacred head; O thou compassionate Redeemer! how art thou spent! To what sufferings art thou expos'd, from thy fervent love to the human race! Jesus answer'd not; but rewarded him with a look of divine complacency.

The Messiah now reach'd the summit of the mountain. This was the confines of heaven; for God was there; and there Jesus pray'd. Earth resounded, and his voice penetrated the gates of the deep: but it was not the voice of threatenings dreadfully utter'd in storm and tempest. It was the voice of the blessed Saviour, speaking peace on earth, good-will towards men. Earth rejoic'd as at the renewal of her beauty; her hills, overspread with an amiable twilight, shouted forth their joy: but only the eternal Father and himself know the whole of the divine petition. This alone the tongue of man can utter.

Almighty Father! the hour of suffering draws near—of suffering for the salvation of men. Chosen by thee as their Redeemer, lo, I come to do thy will, O God! To thee, O thou Supreme! it is known what glory, what felicity, was mine ere the world was—ere, by thy power, I form'd this earth—ere man was created out of the dust.

Eternal Father, thou knowest—it is known also to the host of Heaven, with what ardour I have long'd for the salvation of fallen man. This earth, before my humiliation in an human body, was my chosen object. Often have I cast an eye of pity on thee, O Canaan, land of my future nativity! Often have I lamented the obduracy of thy sons, my brethren. I saw through futurity, and triumph'd in the view of my becoming the Redeemer of all nations, the Saviour of millions of intelligent beings, who with me will eternally enjoy transcendent felicity. I still rejoice in the glorious prospect. But, O my Father and my God! I must first drink of the cup of bitterness. Hide—oh hide not thy face from my distress. If it be thy good pleasure that I fall a prey to cruel and blood-thirsty men, forsake me not, O my God! in the terrible hour! Nature recoils; my flesh trembles; but heavenly Father, thy will be done. I give myself a willing sacrifice for the sins of men. Accept, O my God! of my sincere obedience, and when I shall have seal'd my mission with my blood, receive me again to thy bosom. O my Father, I know that thou wilt reward my ready submission to thy will, and that myriads of applauding angels will witness and hail my triumph before the eternal throne.

Thus spake Jesus, and arose. In his countenance shone sublimity, filial love, and resignation. The Eternal Father looking with delight and complacency on his divine Son, answer'd, I raise my head above the highest Heavens, and stretch my hand through the immensity of space, and swear to Thee, my beloved Son, that I will forgive the sins of the repentant children of men. For thy sake, and through thy mediation, I will accept of their sincere, though imperfect, obedience, and reward those who, like thee, are distinguish'd by a patient continuance in well-doing, with glory, and honour, and immortality.

While the Eternal thus spake, all nature shook: souls just emerging, which had not yet begun to think, trembled, and first caught sensation. Unusual awe over-

whelm'd the heart of the seraph; he was agitated like the earth, when she expects an approaching tempest. The apostate spirits, in the firey deep, shook on their burning thrones, in fearful expectation of encreasing punishment. They sunk lower in the bottomless pit, and on each fell an huge mass of flaming sulphur. All Hell resounded with the execrations of these malignants, against God and his Anointed, the holy Jesus.

The Messiah still continued standing before the Eternal Father. At a distance Gabriel lay on his face in prostrate adoration, fill'd with new and rapturous contemplations. During the innumerable ages of his existence, never had felt ideas and sensations so affecting and sublime. The infinite love and condescension of the almighty Father, the grace and compassion of the great Redeemer, now open'd on his astonish'd mind. The seraph arose—he stood amaz'd—he pray'd. Joy inexpressible thrill'd through his whole frame. From him issu'd such refulgent light and splendor, that the earth melted under his feet: when the divine Mediator, seeing the summit of the mountain illumin'd by his brightness, said, O Gabriel, veil thy lustre, and remember that thou ministerest to me on earth. Haste now to lay this my request before my Father, that the noblest of the human race, the blessed patriarchs and prophets, with all the celestial spirits, may behold that fulness of time for which they have so ardently long'd. There thou needst not shrowd thy glory, since thou wilt appear as the messenger of the Messiah.

Silent the seraph, with heavenly grace and lustre, ascended. Jesus follow'd him with his eyes, tracing his rapid course up to the confines of Heaven.

Now he and the Father enter'd on discourses mysterious and profound: obscure even to the immortals: discourses of things which, in future ages, should display the love of God to man.

The seraph enter'd the borders of the celestial world, whose whole extent is surrounded with suns, which, as an etherial curtain of interwoven light, extend their lustre around Heaven. No dark planet approaches the

refulgent blaze. Clouded nature flies swiftly by, far distant. There the terrestrial orbs seem to roll minute and imperceptible, as the dust, the habitation of worms, is seen to rise under the foot of the traveller. Around Heaven are a thousand paths of extent immeasurable, also border'd by suns.

Along the etherial way, that leads from Heaven to Earth, when first created, constant flow'd, from a source celestial, down to Eden's happy groves, a lucid stream, through which God and his angels descended, when they deign'd to hold blest intercourse with man. But ah! too soon the lucid stream was call'd upwards: for man, by sin polluted, had turn'd a rebel to his God! The immortals then no longer visibly appear'd in all their radiant lustre: they withdrew from a land defac'd by guilt, and left a prey to Death. The silent hill, where yet remain'd the vestiges of the presence of the Eternal: the whispering groves, honour'd by the appearance of the Most High: the sacred peaceful vales, once with pleasure frequented by the youth of Heaven: the umbrageous bowers, where the human heart first overflow'd with sweet sensations, and extatic, grateful rapture; and where the first man wept for joy that he was thus to live forever—these, these the blest spirits left. Curs'd was the earth; it became the general tomb of its once immortal inhabitants. But when hereafter, purify'd by fire, it shall triumphant rise from its ashes, renew'd in beauty, and God, by his omnipotent voice, shall unite the terrestrial orbs to the Heaven of Heavens, the world shall be one Paradise. Then shall the etherial stream of heavenly light again roll from its celestial source, and with resplendent brightness flow to Eden. Then shall assemblies of radiant spirits, coming to earth, frequent its lucid banks, and seek sweet communion with the new immortals.

Up this sacred way Gabriel now ascended, and soon approach'd Heaven, the peculiar residence of the Divine Glory.

In the centre of the assemblage of suns, Heaven rises into an immense dome. The Origin of worlds, the Architype of all that appears fair and lovely, diffuses beauty,

in flowing streams, through the infinite expanse. When the Eternal walks forth, the harmonic choirs borne on the wings of the wind, to the borders of the sunny arch, chant his praise, joining the melody of their golden harps, while he who looks with complacency and delight on all his works, smiles benignant, at the effusions of their gratitude and love.

O thou who teachest my tongue to utter celestial strains! associate of angels! prophetess of God! muse of Sion! instruct me to rehearse the song then sung by the sons of Heaven.

Hail sacred land, where the Most High displays his majesty and grace! Here our dazzled eyes behold him unveil'd, and shining in unclouded light, diffusing joy and rapture through all the bless'd. How infinite art thou in all thy perfections, O Jehovah! Our songs, animated by grateful fervor, and all the powers of harmony, in vain attempt to extol thine excellence. Lost in thine immensity, in feeble strains we strive to express thy glory. O Eternal! thou alone art perfect Thou alone, from the essential excellence of thy nature, wert ever sublimely happy: nor can our homage add to thine underiv'd felicity. Yet, O Most Gracious! prompted by thine overflowing goodness, thou hast created beings to taste thy love, and share thy bliss. Thou Heaven wast first created, then us, Heaven's inhabitants. Far wast thou from thy birth, thou young terrestrial globe, and thou sun, and thou, O moon, the favour'd earth's attendants!

First born of the material creation, what was thine appearance, when, after an eternity of ages, God descended and consecrated thee the mansion of his glory? Thine immense circle call'd to existence, was stretch'd out, and assum'd its glorious form. The creative voice went forth, and join'd the first murmur of the crystalline waters. They heard the awful sound, and rais'd mountain on mountain; like terrestrial worlds. There, big with thought, didst thou, Creator omnipotent, sit on thy new exalted throne. Oh hail! in joyful transports—

hail the thinking Deity! Then, then were ye created, ye angels, ye cherubim and seraphim, incorporeal beings, sublime in thought, and quick to perceive, adoring, the wonders of your great Creator. Hellelujah, a joyful hallelujah we will incessantly sing to the First of Beings. At thy voice solitude fled: at thy word the angelic spirits arose to life and bliss. Hallelujah.

During the hymn the Mediator's refulgent messenger stood on one of the suns nearest Heaven. The Eternal Father rewarded the celestial choir with a look of benignity, and then beheld the seraph. He also attracted the eyes of all the heavenly host, and bowing low in awful adoration, the first of the seraphs went to conduct him in solemn state to the sacred presence. His name with God is The Chosen; but by the heavenly host he is call'd Eloa. He is the fairest spirit of Heaven: his thoughts are more sublime than the enraptur'd soul of man can conceive: his looks more lovely than the vernal morn, brighter than the stars, when with youthful splendor they flew from the Creator's forming hand to run their courses. At his creation the Eternal reduc'd the resplendent crimson of the morning into an etherial body, and on his first existence the radiant clouds of Heaven instantly gather'd round him. God then with outstretch'd arm rais'd him from them, and blessing him, said, Behold thy Creator! The seraph stood before him, and seeing the Eternal, view'd him with rapture, till he sunk, overpower'd by the refulgent brightness of the divine countenance. At length he utter'd the new and elevated sensations of his heavenly mind: but worlds shall perish, a new system be rais'd from the dust, and ages be lost in eternity, before the most exalted Christian shall feel sensations so sublime.

Eloa, who flew with glowing beams, and in all his lustre, to conduct Gabriel to the altar of the Mediator, knew him far distant, and melted into pleasing rapture at the sight of one of the immortals, with whom he had before taken a circuit through all the wide creation of God, visiting each world with its inhabitants, and per-

forming actions not to be imitated by the most perfect of the race of man. Now to each other known, they, with cordial looks of love and open arms, fly swift into each others embrace, where they remain tremulous with joy. Thus tremble two virtuous brothers, who, after braving death for their country, and performing immortal deeds, meet, full of heroic ardour, and embrace before their still greater father. God from afar beheld and bless'd them. They mov'd towards the celestial throne, friendship giving a brighter glow to their heavenly lustre, while they approach'd the sanctuary of God. Near the seat of the divine splendor, on a celestial mount, rests the night of the Most Holy. A pale silver light glimmers within the mysterious place, but the inside is conceal'd by a sacred gloom from the eyes of angels; except when God himself, by his majestic thunder, opens the veil of darkness, and then the celestial spectators behold and adore.

At the entrance of the sanctuary, the altar of the Messiah, like the mount of God, stood unclouded. Thither Gabriel went in festal splendor, carrying two golden censers: then stood wrapt up in thought. Elos, who was with him, call'd forth from his harp divine harmony, to prepare the offering seraph for supplications fervent and sublime. The flowing melody fill'd Gabriel with an heavenly transport, and swell'd his labouring thoughts to ecstasy. Thus the ocean rises, when the voice of the Lord moves over it with mighty winds. Then the messenger of the Messiah rais'd his eyes to God, and offer'd up the petitions. The Eternal heard his prayer, and with him all the celestial host. The Supreme himself caus'd a descending flame to light the incense. Fumes of sacred fragrance then arising, ascended to God, as on earth mountains raise their lofty heads towards Heaven.

God had fix'd his all-seeing eyes on this terrestrial globe, where his son, transported with love to man, was still engag'd in prayer: but now the face of the Almighty, beaming with grace and mercy, fill'd all Heaven with refulgent glory. With silent rapture the exalted spirits

adoring, wait the voice of the Lord. The celestial cedars no longer wave: the crystalline ocean lies silent within its lofty shores: the breathing winds stop within the brazen mountains, and with expanded wings, wait for the voice divine. This universal silence remain'd unbroken, till thunder suddenly rolling from the sanctuary, proclaim'd the approaching answer. The most holy place also open'd to prepare the expecting Heavens. Then to the mighty Eloa, the cherub Urim, wrapt in divine contemplations, said, Behold, O Eloa, the holy of holies! At this the seraph arose, and advancing with solemn pace, cry'd, I see on those golden pillars the mysterious tables of prescience. There the book of life is open'd by the breath of mighty winds. That of the general judgment now opens dreadful, like the waving banners of hostile seraphs, and threatens destruction to all the workers of iniquity. The Almighty draws back the veil: but see Urim, the sacred candlesticks glimmer through a silver cloud, that resembles the morning dew descending on the hills. Thus in prophetic vision shine the Christians, the future heirs of salvation. I see thousands and ten thousands of those golden candlesticks, typical of the churches. O Urim! count the sacred number. Urim reply'd, We can number the worlds, we can count the radiant seats of the angels, and the mansions of the bless'd; but not the effects of the great redemption, nor the boundless mercies of the Most High. I now see, return'd Eloa, the judgment seat of Christ. How tremendous art thou, O Judge of the earth! thou art seated on high: thou risest on tempestuous clouds, amidst the bursts of rolling thunder. Ah spare, Messiah! spare, O thou Judge of the earth, arm'd for destruction!

Thus convers'd Eloa and Urim on these mysterious visions. Seven times had the thunder open'd the sacred darkness, when the awful voice of the Eternal slowly descended.

I am love. Such was I before the existence of my creatures—before I form'd the worlds: and now I am Love in my conduct towards man; in the accomplishment of the great work of redemption, by my sending

my beloved Son to die for sinners. Did not my almighty arm support you, ye exalted, but finite beings, the tremendous sight of his awful death would put a period to your existence. The Eternal was silent. Struck with deep amazement, the etherial spirits with folded hands stood before him. Now making a sign to Eloa, that seraph, with humility in his look, view'd the face of Heaven's gracious King, and instantly reading there the thoughts divine, turn'd to the celestial audience, and said, Behold the Eternal, ye righteous sons of Heaven, and know his counsels. Next to his dear Son, were ye most belov'd, when he laid the gracious plan of redemption. That ye have ardently long'd to see the day of salvation, and to behold the great Messiah triumph over the powers of Hell, God is your witness. Blessed be ye his offspring. Shout for joy that ye see the glory of his face, who is the Source of Being, the Eternal and Unchangeable, whose mercy endureth forever. Him whom no creature can conceive, condescends to term you his children. For your sake alone, this messenger of peace is sent by his beloved Son, to the celestial altars. Rejoice, ye inhabitants of the earth, we will join with you in admiring the wonders of your redemption, which we shall behold with clearer light, with purer devotion, and more extatic rapture, while we give our pity to you, ye devout and humble friends of the Redeemer, who are still liable to darkness and error. But while his cruel, his obdurate persecutors have their names eras'd from the book of life, to you, ye faithful, your Saviour sends a divine light. Ye shall then no longer, with weeping eyes, behold his sacred blood; but joyful shall see it stream for you, flowing into eternal life. Then, solac'd in the bosom of peace, ye shall triumphant celebrate the festival of everlasting repose. Ye seraphs, ye souls of the fathers now escap'd from the snares of life, and rais'd to glory, begin the eternal jubilee, which shall last when time shall be no more. The righteous children of the earth shall, generation after generation, be gathered to you, and join your bless'd assemblies, till at last, at the consummation

of all things, they and you shall, at the general judgment, be clothed with new and immortal bodies, and enter into more perfect felicity. Meanwhile, ye exalted angels of the throne, inform the guardians of God's immense creation, that they prepare to celebrate the chosen day; and ye saints of the human race—ye progenitors of the Messiah; (for, from those bones of mortality ye have left in the dust, ripening for the resurrection, he deriv'd his human form) to you also are imparted the joy which God alone feels entire, mingled with the sensations of the Deity. Ye immortal souls arise, and hasten to the sun that illumines the orb of redemption: there shall ye distant see the first sufferings of the great Redeemer. Descend by that luminous path, whence ye shall behold the whole extent of nature, rising to your view in renewed beauty. Hear it, O Heavens! the great Jehovah will establish a day of sacred rest, a second sabbath, more solemn than that when ye spiritual intelligences, and ye seraphic spirits, with joyful acclamations celebrated the completion of the great work of creation. New-born nature then smil'd with ravishing beauty. The morning stars sang together, and join'd with you, ye angels, in paying homage to the great Creator. Now the Messiah, the Effluence of his glory, will accomplish a work of grace and mercy no less resplendent, and this sabbath which commences with his passion, is styl'd by the Most High, the sabbath of salvation, and of the everlasting covenant. Thus rapt in astonishment, Eloa spake. Silent the heavenly host look'd up to the sanctuary: when, at a sign from God, the messenger of the Messiah ascended to the lofty throne, and there received secret orders to be deliver'd to Uriel, and the guardians of the earth, concerning the miracles to be perform'd at the death of Christ.

In the mean time the cherubims had descended from their seats, Gabriel follow'd, and approaching the altar of the earth, distant heard from the high-bending arch of Heaven, sighs and ejaculations in plaintive accents breath'd for the salvation of men: above all, he distinguish'd those utter'd by the first of the human race.

This is the altar of which the prophet of the new covenant saw the celestial model on the shore of Patmos, where he heard the voices of the martyrs, in mournful sounds, ascend, while, with angelic tears, they lamented that the Judge so long delay'd the day of vengeance.

The seraph having descended to the altar of the earth, Adam, fill'd with eager expectation, hasten'd towards him, not unseen. A lucid etherial body was the radiant mansion of his blessed spirit, and his form as lovely as the bright image in the Creator's mind, when meditating on the form of man in the blooming fields of Paradise. Adam approach'd with an amiable smile, that diffus'd over his face an air of sweetest dignity, and thus with impassion'd accents spoke; Hail happy seraph! messenger of peace! at the voice of thy blessed embassy, which resounded from afar, my soul arose joyful. Thou dear Messiah, may I too, like this seraph, behold thee in thy sacred manly beauty, in the garb of compassion, in which thou hast consented to reconcile my fallen offspring. Lead me to the steps imprinted by the feet of my Redeemer, the friend of all my race. At due distance will I attend him. Shew me where he pours out his soul in fervent prayer for man. Ah, may the first of sinners presume to behold him through his gushing tears of joy! O earth, my native land! I was once thy first inhabitant! On thee I cast a tender look: thy fields, blasted by the thunder of the curse, would, in the company of the divine Messiah, now vested in a mortal body, like that I left in the dust, be more delightful, than O Paradise! thy flowery plains, copy'd from the celestial meads.

Thy desire, first of men, answer'd the seraph, with friendly voice, I will mention to the Mediator. If it be his pleasure, he himself will intimate to thee, that thou shalt see him as he is, with all his glories shrouded by his humiliation.

Now the angelic spirits left Heaven, and separating, swiftly distributed themselves among all the various worlds form'd by the hand of the Omnipotent. To the

earth Gabriel descended alone; when the stars, moving in their several orbits, silently saluted him with an universal morn. Instantly resounded from every quarter, new names given to the terraqueous globe: the favourite of Heaven, the place where God a second time displays his glory, the lasting witness of the mercy and compassion of the great Messiah. Thus angelic voices from each orb resounded through the wide expanse. Gabriel heard them, while with speedy flight he descended to the earth.

Here the unruffled veil of darkness cover'd the mountains; cool and silent repose reign'd in the lowly vales. With eager looks Gabriel enter'd the gloom, seeking the Messiah. Him he found in a lonely valley, winding between the aspiring summits of Olivet's sacred mount. Overcome with thoughts profound, the blessed Saviour was fallen asleep, but his ever-active mind was still employ'd in great ideas of love to man. The bare rock was the couch of the mighty Prince of Peace. Placid love, a divine smile, benignity and grace inexpressible appear'd in his face, while a tear of soft compassion gently stole down his cheek; and though the lineaments of his expressive countenance wanted the glow of life and active spirit, they still spoke his tender friendship for mankind. Gabriel beholding his sweet aërial slumbers, stood gazing on him in fix'd attention. Thus a travelling seraph views the blooming earth in vernal beauty clad, when dewdrops glittering hang on every flow'r, and Hesperus lights his evening lamp, to guide the pensive sage to groves where sacred meditation and peaceful rapture dwell.

After long and silent contemplation, Gabriel thus spoke; O thou whose piercing view extends to the Heavens, thou who hearest me amidst the slumbers of thine earthly frame! with assiduous care have I executed all thy commands. While thus employ'd, the first of men express'd with longing ardour, his desire to see thy face. Now I obey thy great Father's will, and hasten hence to glorify thy redeeming love. Meanwhile be silent ye

creatures that walk the earth or skim the air, while your Creator sleeps. A moment of this fleeting time, while he is here, should to you be dearer than the ages, during which, with busy and sedulous care, some of your species have administer'd to the service of man. Ye aërial sounds, remain silent within your tumultuous caverns, or only in soft and tremulous murmurs rise. Ye hovering clouds, shed from your bosoms balmy rest into the cooling shades. Wave not ye cedars, and ye palms be still; for your Creator sleeps.

Thus in softest accents the gentle seraph express'd his care. Then flew to the assembly of the guardians of the earth, who, in subordination to the great Supreme, govern this terrestrial globe, guiding the events of providence. To these was he to express the desire of the blessed spirits, the approaching reconciliation, and the second sabbath.

O thou who, next to Gabriel, presidest in the great affair of redemption! guardian spirit of the earth, the mother of so many children of immortality, who through the revolving centuries, are sent to the regions on high, while the ruins of the habitation of the inextinguishable soul are interr'd under eminences, on which the foot of the passenger never rests. Thou of this once glorious earth the protector, O seraph Eloa! forgive thy future friend, for making known to mortals, as taught by Sion's muse, thy secret residence since Eden's creation. If fill'd with solitary delight, he is rapt in meditation deep, and the bright round of silent ecstasy: if he has listen'd to the voice of angels, and his enraptur'd soul has heard discourses celestial, oh hear! when bold and sublime, like the youth of heaven, he sings not the mouldering ruins of the world; but leads man, devoted to death, and rising to immortality, to the assembly of the saints, to the council of the guardian angels.

In the silent recess of the unregarded north pole, reign Solitude and eternal Night, whence incessantly flow darkness and clouds, like an overwhelming sea. Thus, at the call of Moses, a black gloom once, O Nile! con-

ceal'd thy seven channels, and hid the everlasting pyramids, the tombs of kings. Never yet has a being whose eye is bounded by the visible horizon, seen these desert tracts, involv'd in nocturnal stillness, where the human voice was never heard, and where there will be no resurrection; but dedicated to musings deep, and refin'd speculations, the seraphim render them glorious, when passing over the mountains sweetly absorb'd, in a prophetic calm, they behold the future felicity of mankind. In the centre of these tracts opens the angelic gate, thro' which the guardian spirits descend into their sanctuary.

As in hardy winter, after days dark and gloomy, the sun rises bright over the snowy mountains, when clouds and night fly before his all-enlivening rays, while the icy plains, and hoary forests, with brilliant whiteness glitter in his beams: thus Gabriel advanc'd, brightening the dusky eminences over which he flew. Soon had his foot reach'd the sacred gate, which open'd spontaneous before him, sounding like the rustling wings of cherubims, and on his entrance, instantly clos'd. The seraph now penetrated into the depths of the earth, where old Ocean slowly rolls his waves to desart and uninhabited coasts, while mighty Rivers, the sons of Ocean, deep resounding, lash the hollow shores, as if agitated by a tempest. Gabriel still advancing, his sacred residence soon appear'd before him. The gate, compos'd of a cloud, gave way at his approach, and then glowing with celestial brightness, vanish'd. Darkness rolling under his rapid feet, fled as he advanc'd; while far behind, waving flames mark'd his path. And now the beauteous seraph enter'd the angelic assembly.

Where, far from us, the earth turns on its centre, is a vast concave fill'd with celestial breezes; in the midst of which is a sun crown'd with flowing radiance, mildly refulgent. From this source, life and warmth ascend into the veins of the earth. The superior orb of day, jointly with this his never-failing assistant, forms the gay flow'ry Spring; the fervid Summer, loaded with bending

branches, and thee, O Autumn! rich in golden fruit, and smiling on the mountains cloth'd with purple vineyards. But within its horizon never did this sun rise or set. Round it in fleecy clouds smiles an eternal morn. There he who fills the heavens and the earth with his presence, in these clouds makes known his thoughts to the admiring angels, displaying before them the wonders of providence. Thus God here reveals his grace, when after prolific showers, the rainbow appears in a distant falling cloud, and to thee, O Earth! declares the divine covenant.

On this sun Gabriel alighted. Around him assembled the guardians of monarchies, the angels of war and death, who in the labyrinth of destiny, to the divine hand convey the directing thread, by which the Almighty secretly overrules the actions of kings, when they, inflated with pride, triumph in their own strength, and consider their subjects as made only to administer to their lust and ambition. There were likewise the guardians of the virtuous, who conduct the pensive sage, when fond of privacy, he avoids all human schemes of earthly grandeur, in silence opening to his mind the books of endless futurity. These also unseen, add wings to the inspiring thoughts of the enraptur'd Christian, and join their aid, when a devout assembly pour forth their souls in hymns of praise to the great Redeemer. When the soul of the just departed Christian, hovering over its late body, sees the pale and ghastly visage, and all the dismal marks of the triumph of death over vanquish'd nature, then this blessed band, with cheerful countenance, receive him, saying, Beloved soul! the time will come when we shall gather together all these ruins of mortality; when the tabernacles of clay, thus disfigur'd by the ruthless hand of death, shall, at the morning of the resurrection, awake from a new creation. Come then, thou future citizen of Heaven, what a delightful prospect lies before thee! O divine soul! the chief of victors, who has conquer'd death, and triumph'd over the grave, waits to receive thee!

Round the seraph also flock'd the souls of those tender

infants who had just enter'd into life; but fled weeping with the piteous cries of childhood. Their timid eyes had view'd with astonishment the objects around them, when, not daring to stay on the great theatre, yet unopen'd to their view, their guardian angels conduct them thence, and animating them with rapturous songs, join'd to the harmony of the reviving harp, they in soft and melodious strains tell them, how, and from whence, they receiv'd their origin; of the purity of the human soul, when proceeding out of the hands of the all-perfect Spirit; and with what juvenile lustre the new-created suns with their attendant worlds, appear'd before the great Creator. The progenitors of the human race, say they, expect you; a glorious view of him, who has crown'd you with mercy, awaits you at the eternal throne. Thus do they instruct their worthy disciples in that sublime wisdom, the fleeting shadows of which erring mortals vainly pursue. The souls of the infants now quitting their lucid bowers, join'd their faithful guardians, who, encompassing the divine messenger, he made known to the assembled spirits, the orders of the Most High concerning the Messiah. Transported they listen'd, and when he ceas'd to speak, stood rapt in deep contemplation.

An amiable pair, nam'd Benjamin and Jedida, two infant souls in tender friendship join'd, at length embracing, thus discours'd; Is it not Jesus, O Jedida! of whom the seraph spoke? Ah! well do I remember, when we were on earth, the ardour with which he folded us in his arms! How tenderly he press'd us to his throbbing heart! A tear of benignity and grace fell on his cheek—I kiss'd it away—I see it still—ever shall I see it. I too remember, answer'd Jedida, that holding me in his arms, he said to our mothers, who were standing by, Resemble these little children, or ye cannot enter into my kingdom. This—this, return'd Benjamin, is the Redeemer! the Saviour! our gracious Friend! the Dispenser of happiness to the human race!

Thus they affectionately convers'd, while Gabriel, now

bent on a new embassy, ascended. A stream of light rolling down, flow'd as he went, with magnificent splendor, from the feet of the immortal. Thus the inhabitants of the moon behold the day of this terraqueous globe illuminate their nights, when dew-dropping clouds descend on the top of their mountains. Gabriel thus ascended, amidst the acclamations of rejoicing angels, and of the souls who had left their bodies, into the more expanded atmosphere. Like the arrow flying from the silver bow, and wing'd for victory, he shot along by the stars, and hasted to the sun. Then alighting at Uriel's residence, found on one of the pinnacles of that noble structure, the souls of the fathers, whose fix'd looks follow'd the beams that dispense the new-born day to the land of Canaan. Among these was Adam, the first of men, who appear'd with distinguish'd dignity, standing sublimely pensive. Gabriel join'd him, and they, with the guardians of the sun, stood waiting for the sight of the mount of Olives, conversing on the salvation of mankind.

THE

MESSIAH.

BOOK II.

The Argument.

The souls of the patriarchs see the Messiah awake at break of day; and the parents of the human race alternately salute him with a hymn. Jesus learns from Raphael, John's guardian angel, that this disciple is viewing a demoniac among the sepulchres on the mount of Olives. He goes thither, and finds Samma, whom Satan attempts to kill, by throwing him into despair. The Messiah puts Satan to flight; who returning to Hell, gives an account of what he knows of Jesus and determines his death: but is opposed by Abbadona. Adramelech speaking in support of Satan's determination, all Hell approves it; on which Satan and Adramelech return to the earth, to put their design in execution. Abbadona following them at a distance, sees at the gate of Hell, Abdiel, a seraph, once his friend, whom he addresses: but Abdiel taking no notice of him, he proceeds forwards; bewails the forfeiture of his glory: despairs of finding grace, and after vainly endeavouring to destroy himself, descends on the earth. Satan and Adramelech also advance to the earth, and alight on the mount of Olives.

THE

MESSIAH.

BOOK II.

THE morn now descending over the woods of waving cedars, Jesus arose. The spirits of the patriarchs saw him from their solar mansion. Among these were the parents of the human race array'd in heavenly beauty, who thus alternate sang.

Adam began. Fairest of days, said he, of all in the stores of time, most sacred! At thy return, the souls of men, the cherubim and seraphim shall hail thy rising and setting light. Whether descending to the earth, or whether the bright spirits of Heaven diffuse thy radiance through the firmament, or thou advancest by the throne of God, thee in festive pomp will we celebrate with hallelujahs jubilant. Thee will we bless with joyful gratulations, O day, in which our ravish'd eyes first behold the great Messiah array'd in humility. How beautiful is his form! how lovely! how divine!

Blessed and holy art thou who broughtest him forth—more bless'd than Eve, the mother of men. Though innumerable my offspring, I am also the mother of innumerable sinners: but thou fair daughter of earth! hast brought forth only one, the Son of God, the righteous, the spotless, the divine Messiah! With wandering eye I view my beloved earth: but thee, O Paradise! I no longer behold: thou wert swept away by the waters of the overwhelming deluge. Thy lofty umbrageous cedars which God himself had planted; thy tranquil bowers, the mansion of the young virtues, no storm, no thunder,

no angel of death hast spar'd. Thou Bethlehem, where Mary brought him forth, where, with maternal ecstasy, she first press'd him to her bosom, be now my Eden. Thou Well of David, be the clear spring, where I, just coming from the hands of my divine Maker, first saw myself; and thou homely cottage, where he first wept, be thou to me the Bower of primeval innocence. O that I, in Eden, had borne thee! O that I, just after my fatal transgression had brought thee forth! then would I have gone to my Judge, where the earth open'd under him, as if to form my grave; where the rustling of the tree of knowledge produc'd a dreadful sound; where his thunders announc'd the sentence of the curse; where trembling I stood, and fainted with terror. There would I have gone to him. Thee, weeping, should I have embrac'd, and pressing thee to my fluttering heart, should have cry'd, Forgive me, O my God! and no longer be incensed against me. I have borne the Saviour, the Redeemer, the Prince of Peace!

The first of men then resum'd, Holy art thou, adoreable and eternal, O thou First Cause! thou Prime Source of being, of mercy, of felicity! thou Father of the divine, the holy Jesus, whom thou, all-gracious, hast chosen to redeem mankind, my issue! Their alienation from thee I have ever deplor'd: Thou, O God! hast beheld my tears—By you, ye seraphim, have they been seen and number'd.—Ye spirits of the dead, the bless'd souls of my sleeping descendants, have heard me sigh for the promis'd happiness of our offspring. Without thee, O Messiah! Heaven itself would lose its charms: but thy divine grace, thy condescending mercy and love to man, changes my paternal concern into rapturous joy.

And now, all-gracious Redeemer! Son most dear! return'd Eve; while thou bearest our image, the image of mortal man, thee let us implore, to complete the offering made for us. For this thou hast descended from the celestial abodes—for this thou hast veil'd thy glories, and art cloth'd in flesh. O thou Creator and Judge! renew the earth, thine, and our native land, then quick return

to Heaven; while we, O thou divine, thou spotless Redeemer! hail thy mercy and thy love!

Through the domes of the angelic palace resounded the voices of these fervent souls. The Messiah heard them in his deep recess, as in a sacred solitude, the holy prophet rapt in contemplation, hears, in soft whispers, the voice of the Eternal. Jesus now began to descend from the top of Olivet. In the midst of the mount, a cluster of palm trees growing on an eminence, rear'd their waving heads into the light flimsy clouds of hovering morning vapours. Under these palms the Messiah perceiv'd Raphael, John's guardian angel, absorb'd in meditations deep and awful, while gentle breezes flowing from him, brought to the Mediator, sounds which none but he could hear.

With gracious voice, the Messiah spake. Raphael, draw near, said he, and invisible walk by my side. How hast thou watch'd the pure soul of John, my beloved disciple? Did his thoughts, O Raphael! resemble thine? Where hast thou left him? I watch'd him, O holy Mediator! answer'd the seraph, with the utmost care. Holy dreams hover'd round his transported soul. Oh that thou hadst seen him, when sleeping, he beheld thee! A smile of complacency and love overspread his face. Thy seraph also beheld Adam, when, sleeping in the blooming fields of Eden, the lovely form of Eve, just risen into existence, was presented by his divine Maker, to his mind; but the pleasure diffus'd over his countenance, was exceeded by the pleasing rapture visible in the face of thy holy disciple. He is now among the gloomy mansions of death lamenting over a demoniac, who, pale as the ghastly corpse, lies stretch'd in the dust of the dead. O thou most Gracious! wilt thou not see him? Wilt thou not behold the gentle youth, overcome by sympathizing distress, his heart swell'd by the painful feelings of humanity, and his whole frame trembling with horror? I myself was so struck at the sight, that the tear of sorrow quiver'd in my eye, and I hastily withdrew: for always have I been deeply affected at

the sufferings of those whom thou hast created immortal.

Raphael ceas'd. Indignation sparkled in the eyes of the Mediator, and raising them up to Heaven, he cry'd, O Father omnipotent! hear me now I call upon thee. May the enemy of mankind feel the effects of thy justice; that Heaven may rejoice at seeing Hell involv'd in confusion, shame, and terror.

Jesus now drew near to the sepulchres, which were hewn out of the cliffs of the rock. Thick and gloomy woods guarded the entrance from the view of the hasty traveller. Here the morning dawn lower'd in chilly coolness, and the sun faintly shot his beams among the tombs. Samma, thus was the demoniac call'd, lay in a swoon by the sepulchre of his youngest and best beloved son. This short repose Satan allow'd him, in order to torment him with the greater cruelty. Thus he lay prostrate by the mouldering bones, and the once animated dust that sprung from his own flesh. Near him stood his other son weeping, with his swell'd eyes lift up to Heaven. The deceas'd child they thus lamented, the fond mother, mov'd by the entreaties of this wretched parent, had once brought, when agitated by the malice of Satan, he rov'd, as now, among the dead. Ah father! then cry'd the darling of his heart, his little Benoni, breaking from his mother's hold, while she, fill'd with terror, hasted after him,—Ah my poor father! will you not kiss me? then clinging about his knees, press'd his hand to his breast. The father embrac'd him trembling. The little innocent returned his endearments, and look'd up to him with an engaging smile, and the little pleasing blandishments of infant fondness to attract his notice. When the father suddenly starting, seiz'd the child, and, fill'd with all the fury of Hell, dash'd him against the rock: his brains, mix'd with blood, discolour'd the stone, and with a gentle sigh, his spotless soul left its shatter'd habitation. The madness of the wretched parent instantly subsided. He threw himself on the ground; then rising, snatch'd up the stiff'ning corpse,

which he folded in his fainting arms: he press'd it to his bosom; and while the mother rent the air with her shrieks and lamentations, he mourn'd inconsolable, crying, My son Benoni! O Benoni, Benoni, my dear son! while repentant tears gush'd from his streaming eyes.

He now lay stretch'd on the earth, and having recover'd from his swoon, his whole soul was suffus'd in grief; when Joel, his other son, turning his face, wet with tears, from his father, beheld the Messiah advancing towards the sepulchres, and fill'd with surprize and joy, cry'd, O father, here is Jesus, the great prophet, coming towards the tombs! Satan heard him, and fill'd with terror, cast a lowering glance through the entrance of the sepulchres. Thus from his dark dwelling looks the profane atheist, when the loud tempest rides along the flaming clouds, and the tremendous chariots of vengeance awfully roll on high. Satan had hitherto tormented Samma only at a distance, sending forth plagues from the remotest parts of the dusky tombs; but now rising, and arming himself with the terrors of Hell, he launch'd them at the poor afflicted wretch, who instantly sprung on his feet, but void of strength, he again sunk on the earth. His troubled soul was scarce able to struggle against the assaults of death. But suddenly rais'd to madness, he was driven by the arch fiend up the rocks. Here, O benevolent Saviour! Satan would before thy face have dash'd him in pieces by casting him down: but thou wast already there. Thy speedy preventing grace supported the helpless, and bore him up on thine immortal wings. The destroyer of mankind, seeing the Saviour approach, trembled with indignation and terror. Jesus now casting down on the demoniac a look of benignity and grace, a divine power issues from his eyes, and Samma, freed from pain, with fear acknowledges his deliverer: life dawns in that face, which just before had the awful stamp of death. With a loud cry, and streaming eyes, he looks towards Heaven. Fain would he speak; but only tremulous accents proc d from his faltering lips. He stretches out his suppliant

arms to his gracious deliverer, and views him enraptur'd. As the soul of the melancholy sage shudders, when bewilder'd in thought, she doubts the eternity of her future duration; the immortal essence then shrinks back from destruction, till a kindred mind, certain of its immortality, and relying on the promises of the Almighty, approaches with cheering looks. The gloom then disperses, and the illumin'd mind, shaking off the painful depression, exults and triumphs, and seems to become a second time immortal. Thus, to the possess'd, was this divine repose.

The Messiah now address'd Satan with a voice of awful superiority; Spirit of destruction, who art thou, that in my presence hast the presumption to torture man, the race elected for redemption? A voice deep roaring answer'd in wrathful accents, I am Satan, the sovereign of the world, and reign supreme over the independent spirits, for whom I find other employment, than that given to the celestial songsters. Thy fame, O mortal prophet! (for Mary could never bring forth an immortal) has reach'd the depths of Hell; and I myself, an honour thou mayst well boast, came to see the Saviour, whose coming was proclaim'd by the slaves of Heaven. But thou becamest a man, an enthusiastic visionary, like those, Death, my son, who is far mightier than thou, has already laid in the grave. I deem'd it beneath me to mind what these new immortals were doing; yet, not to be quite inactive, I tormented mankind. This thou thyself hast seen; that face hast been mark'd by the finger of death. I now hasten to Hell. My irresistible foot shall lay waste the earth and the wide ocean, to open me a commodious passage. Hell, with joyful acclamations, shall celebrate my return. If thou darest to oppose me, do it now. I shall come back with the power of a king, to protect the world I have conquer'd. But first die, thou wretch, added he, impetuously rushing on Samma.

The Messiah, calm and silent, like the omnipotent Father, when with a nod he saves or destroys a world,

check'd his fury, and render'd feeble all his boasted power. He fled precipitate, forgetting in his flight to make the earth and the ocean feel the force of his irresistible foot. Samma now descended from the rock, with no less joy than Nebuchadnezzar flew from the majestic stream of the Euphrates, when, by the decree of the Almighty, his reason was restor'd, and rising erect, he was able to view the Heavens. The terrors of the Lord, and the roaring waves of the impetuous stream, no longer pass'd over him, amidst the rolling thunder, and the forked lightning, like that seen on mount Sinai. The prince then went to Babylon's pensile gardens, not to exalt himself as a God; but lying prostrate in the dust, with his arms stretch'd out towards Heaven, he pour'd forth the warm effusions of his gratitude to the Eternal. Thus Samma, hasting to the Messiah, fell at his feet, and cry'd, O man of God! O heavenly Prophet! suffer me to follow thee; and let the life thou hast restor'd be devoted to thee! He then rising on his knees, threw his trembling arms about the Redeemer. Jesus, casting on him a look of benevolence, mildly answer'd, Follow me not; but henceforth frequent the hill of Calvary, where thou shalt see the hope of Abraham, and of the prophets.

The Messiah had scarcely spoke, when the innocent Joel, with a timid air, address'd himself to John. Dear Rabbi, said he, lead me to the great Prophet of God; for I would speak to him. The belov'd disciple then taking him by the hand, presented him to the Saviour, to whom, with innocent simplicity, he thus spoke: O great Prophet, why may not my father and I follow thee? Let me ask thee too, Why dost thou stay in this dismal place, where the sight of the bones of the dead chills my very blood? Come then, Oh come thou Man of God, to our house, to which my father is returning. My poor mother, I am sure, will be glad to wait on thee. Indeed she will. She will treat thee with milk and honey. She will give thee the best fruit that grow on our trees. She will cover thee with the wool

of the youngest of our lambs. When summer returns, I will shew thee those trees in our garden my father has given to me, and thou shalt sit under their shade.—But O Benoni! my dear brother Benoni is dead! I must leave him in that tomb. No more, Benoni, wilt thou go with me to water the flowers: nor in the cool evening wilt thou fondly wake me! see there, O divine Prophet! he lies within that tomb. Jesus, with a tender smile, embrac'd him; then wiping away his tears, sent him home, and turning to John, said, Amiable child! so tender and ingenuous a mind have I seldom found in those of riper years. Thus he spoke, and stay'd with John among the sepulchres.

In the mean time Satan, wrapp'd in clouds and vapours, pass'd through the valley of Jehosaphat, and, unseen, cross'd the Dead Sea. Then reaching cloud-capp'd Carmel, he, from thence shot up into the heavens, where, with look malign, he wander'd through the universe, amidst suns and worlds innumerable; enrag'd that, after a long succession of ages, they still shone with all the beauty and grandeur the Thunderer had imparted to them at their creation. Then, desirous of imitating the works of the great Omnipotent, and unwilling that the morning stars should know him by his gloomy aspect, which the mingled radiance render'd more conspicuous, he chang'd his form, and array'd himself in etherial light. But soon the effulgent vesture became insupportable; when being also disgusted at what he beheld, which ill suited a mind so foul, he hasted back to hell. Now, with rapid descent, he reach'd the confines of the mundane system, where immense spaces open'd before him; and these he term'd the frontiers of more extended realms; where he propos'd to fix a new empire. Here, as far as the sickening rays of the last stars of the creation cast a pallid light through the void, he beheld transient gleams; yet saw not Hell. Far from himself and the blessed spirits, God had enclos'd the abode of horror in perpetual darkness. For destruction horrible it was created; and, to answer the end of punishment, it was

dreadfully pompous, and awfully perfect. In three nights Hell was form'd. Then God forever turn'd from it his face: that face wherewith he smiles, with benignity and grace, on his creatures, transfusing through their souls the sweetest joy. Those dismal regions are guarded by two angels, of approv'd valour. The Almighty himself girded them with arms invincible; and with his orders gave his sacred benediction; that they might there restrain the powers of darkness, lest Satan, prompted by malice, should assail the creation of God, and bent on destruction, deform the fair face of nature. To the entrance of Hell, where, with solemn state, the angels sit, descends a lucent path of streaming light, resembling a river of liquid crystal; that thus remote, they might not lose that holy joy, and pleasing rapture, the mingled beauties of the wide creation yield to the pious mind.

Skirting this luminous way, Satan, unseen, reach'd Hell, and rushing fiercely through the gate, wrapp'd in a cloud, in haste mounted his burning throne. Among the eyes dim'd by darkness and despair, none saw him but Zophiel, one of the infernal heralds; who, observing a cloud invest the lofty steps, cry'd to a spirit standing near, Satan, the sovereign of these dark abodes, is at length return'd. That cloud of vapours indicates, that he, so long expected by all the gods, is there. While he yet spake, the intervening cloud dispers'd, and Satan, with terror and rage on his brow, appear'd seated on his throne. The servile herald instantly flies to a volcano, which in streams of flaming sulphur used to proclaim Satan's arrival through all the burning land; there mounting on the wings of a tempest, he ascended from the bottom of the mountain up to its summit; where, wrapp'd in clouds of smoke, is a yawning aperture. There kindling the fiery storm, eruptions terrible proclaim the arch fiend's arrival, and gleaming light illuminating the dark abodes, to the far distant shew Hell's monarch, seated high in pageant state. All the inhabitants of the abyss then appear, and their chiefs haste to seat themselves beneath him on the steps of his throne.

Thou muse of Sion, who undismay'd, look'st, fill'd with sacred fervour and solemn awe, down into the abyss of Hell, while, when the Most High punishes the sinner, thou readest in the divine countenance, self-approbation and calm tranquillity; O now inspire thy suppliant, and let the mighty voices of the infernals roar in my numbers, as the bellowing storm—as the tempest of God!

First appear'd Adramelech, a spirit in guile and malice exceeding Satan; against whom his bosom still boil'd with indignant rage, for being the first who attempted the apostacy, which he himself had long before projected. The actions he performed were not to advance Satan's kingdom, but his own. From years immemorial he had been considering how to raise himself to the dominion of Hell; how to engage the Prince of the fiery deep in a fresh war against the Eternal; how to cause him to be forever banish'd to the infinite space: or, if all fail'd, how he might subdue him by force of arms. These thoughts had employ'd his mind ever since the apostate angels, flying before the conquering arm of the Messiah, had been driven down into the tremendous gulph. The superior spirits then assembling, Adramelech last appear'd; but instead of martial armour, bore a tablet of polish'd gold, and slowly advancing, call'd aloud, Why, O ye kings! do ye thus ignominiously fly? Know, ye celestial warriors, ye noble asserters of liberty, that ye shall enter new and magnificent mansions of immortality. When God had invented the thunder, and with it arm'd the Messiah, who with a tremendous storm drove you to this place of woe, I escap'd, and passing by unseen, to the far distant sanctuary of God, enter'd the awful place, and there found the table of destiny, in which our future fortunes are enroll'd. Draw near ye immortals, and read the archives of Heaven. Here see the sovereign decree of Fate. He then read the following words:

Of the gods over whom Jehovah reigns, one becoming sensible of his divinity, and quitting the Heaven of Heavens, shall dwell with his divine associates in solitary

and gloomy mansions: these will be at first inhabit with pain and reluctance, as he who shall drive them thither, inhabited Chaos, till, for him, I form'd the universe. Such is my will. Dread not, ye celestial spirits, to enter the abodes of terror and dismay; for out of these, new worlds shall arise, more glorious than those ye have left. These Satan shall create; but from me shall ye receive the divine plan. Thus says the god of gods, I who alone circumscribe all space, and with my most glorious world encompass that, with all the orbs and their gods. Here Adramelech ceas'd; but in vain did the spirits of darkness strive to give credit to his words.

The Most High, who heard his blasphemies, said, I am Jehovah, and beside me there is no other God. The Heavens shall declare my glory, and the trembling sinner bear witness to my power. Then proceeded from the mouth of God the momentous decree. Deep in the lowest Hell rises a luminous mass, in the midst of the flaming sea, which runs into the lake of death. This mass enormous, the circling thunders, in whirling eddies, tore from its base, when rising high it struck the proud Adramelech, fraught with lies, and cast him with his impious tablet into the deadly lake. There seven nights he lay rolling in the abyss. Long after, he caus'd himself to be worshipped on earth as the supreme God, and had a temple erected to his honour, in which he himself presided, placing over the high altar the tablet of destiny, which none believ'd. Thither his partizans resorted, and like slavish hypocrites, worshipp'd the visionary deity, when present, with reverence, and while absent, with mockery. From this temple now came Adramelech, and concealing his secret rancour, seated himself on the throne, close to Satan.

Next came Moloch, a warlike spirit. Lest the Thundering Warrior, for so he calls the great Jehovah, should descend to seize the plains of Hell, he vainly fortify'd them with a wall of mountains, rais'd with towering battlements. Oft when the gloomy dawn rises in sulphurous vapours from the banks of the flaming ocean, the

inhabitants of Hell see him tottering under the stormy peak of some lofty eminence, while he slowly advances down the declivity of the mountains, when, having cast his load on his new rais'd mound, which rises towards the high vaulted roof of Hell, he stands in the clouds, listening to the echo made by the fall of the ponderous rock, and fancies it to be the noise of the rattling thunder. The souls of the once proud conquerors of the earth then viewing him with astonishment from beneath, he rushes among them from the stupendous heights, while they, wing'd by fear, fly from the martial fiend. He now went in his sable armour, which resounded as he walk'd, resembling thunder involv'd in black clouds. Before him the mountain shook, and behind, the rocks trembling, sunk. Thus he advanc'd to the throne of Satan.

After him appear'd Belial, who in mournful silence came from the dreary forests and desart wastes, where the black streams of death, issuing from a source involv'd in clouds, flow dark and languid to the foot of Satan's throne. Vain, eternally vain are his endeavours to render the accursed land on its banks, like the bright creation of God. Thou, O Eternal! laughest at his attempts, when, howling like the tempest, he would imitate the cooling breeze of the Zephyrs, and when with impotent arm he attempts to drive the sullen stream before him. At these labours he incessantly toils, while the Terrors of God roar in his destructive wings, and Desolation, array'd in deformity, is spread over the trembling abyss. With rage Belial remembers the eternal Spring, which, like a young seraph, smiles on the ever-blooming flowers of Heaven. Fain would he imitate the beauties of that season in Hell's nocturnal vales. Then frowns, and vents indignant sighs, at seeing the doleful land lying before him in dreary darkness, for ever incapable of improvement; and notwithstanding all his pains, infinite tracks fill'd with a dreadful scene of woe. Belial, with a brow lowering with dire dejection, repair'd to Satan. His mind still boil'd with re-

venge against him who drove him from the celestial fields, into that land of terror and desolation, which every succeeding century seem'd to render more intolerable.

Thou Magog, who dwellest in the lake—thou also amidst thy waters sawest the return of Satan. Thou camest forth, rising in the midst of a roaring whirlpool, and when thy feet divided the black stream, the sea, driven before thee, rose like extensive mountains. Magog curs'd the Lord. The voice of his wild blasphemies continually flow'd in loud bellowings from his distorted mouth. Since his being cast from Heaven, he has been ever uttering execrations against the Eternal; and his breast boiling with hatred and revenge, he was weakly bent on destroying Hell, though it should cost him the labour of millions of ages. Being now alighted on the burning land, he spread devastation around, throwing the whole shore with its mountains into the deep.

Thus did the Princes of the infernal regions assemble about their king. Like the islands of the sea when torn from their foundations, they rush'd on with boisterous uproar, and irresistible tumult. After them crowds of inferior spirits flock'd, as the waves of the ocean rolling to the lofty shores. Myriads of spirits appear'd, who, sentenc'd to contempt and endless infamy, chaunted their own exploits to their harps, which had been crack'd by the thunder of Heaven, and sounded the discordant notes of death. Thus in the midnight hour, the lofty cedars, split by a tempest, groan, when Boreas in his brazen chariot sweeps over them, while Lebanon is agitated, and Hermon trembles. Satan saw and heard them coming. He starts up in a wild transport, and casting his eyes over them, beholds the Atheists, a mean grovelling band, among whom was Gog, their horrid leader, above all in phrensy, and in power pre-eminent. They endeavour to imagine, that what they saw in Heaven was all a dream, the idle produce of phantastic visions; and, lost in a labyrinth of opinion, persuade

themselves, that the great Jehovah, first their Father, and then their Judge, has no existence. Satan beheld them with a contemptuous smile. For some time he stood wrapp'd in thought, then slowly mov'd his eyes around, and again sat down. As menacing storms hover slow and dilatory over dreary and inhospitable mountains, so Satan sat frowning and pensive. At length furious, he open'd his lips, from which a tempest burst forth, and a thousand claps of impotent thunder issu'd from his impious mouth.

Ye formidable bands, if ye are indeed those who bravely maintain'd with me the war in the plains of Heaven, during three dreadful days, hear with triumph what I shall relate concerning my stay on earth. Hear ye also, my friends, the noble resolution I, your supreme god and king, have taken to put Jehovah to shame. Sooner shall Hell pass away, sooner shall he annihilate his creation, which he once form'd from the dark chaos, and again dwell in solitude, than he shall wrest from us our dominion over the race of man. Ye gods, ever unconquer'd, ever free shall ye remain, though he should send even hither his Reconciler, with thousands of his heavenly messengers: nor shall he rob us of our dominion, though he himself should descend to the earth to save mankind. But against whom do I vent my indignation? Who is this insignificant Saviour, this Messiah, who comes cloth'd in a mortal body? Would he, who, arm'd with the thunder of Heaven, drove us from the celestial plains, enter the womb of a mortal? or is he, who must soon moulder in the dust, to make war on us, and destroy our empire? Yet there are some here that have timorously fled before him:—who, at his approach, escap'd from the emaciated bodies of the mortals they tormented. Ye dastards, tremble before this assembly! hide your faces, and blush in obscurity. Hear it, ye gods! they fled! Why, ye pusillanimous, did ye fly? Why did ye style this Jesus, who is beneath both you and me, the Son of the eternal God? But that ye may know who he is, hear from me the history of this

arrogant Impostor. Hear this, ye assembly of gods, with triumph.

From the remotest time a prophecy has prevail'd among the Jews, a nation, of all others, the most addicted to visions, that a Saviour is to arise, descended from David, one of their kings, who will forever deliver them from their enemies, and raise their monarchy to unparallell'd glory. Ye are not ignorant that some of your companions once came with the tidings that they had seen on mount Tabor, a host of rejoicing angels, who, with seeming rapture, and awful reverence, incessantly call'd on the name of Jesus.. That the cedars of the mountain trembled, and the sound of their hymns, utter'd in jubilant strains, echo'd through the neighbouring rocks, while all Tabor resounded with Jesus the Saviour. Then Gabriel, proud and insolent, went in triumph to an Israelitish woman, and giving her the salutation only due to the immortals, in a voice and gesture of reverence, said, From thee shall a king be born, who will protect the portion of David, and exalt the inheritance of Israel. His name shall be Jesus. He shall be call'd the Son of God, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Why, O ye Gods of Hell! when ye heard of this, were ye struck with terror? Much more have I heard, yet continue undismay'd. That ye may perceive the glorious ardor with which I am inspir'd, nothing will I conceal from you. Does it become us to be apprehensive of danger, because a mortal Dreamer on our earth assumes the titles of the Son of God, the Redeemer, and the Saviour?

During this speech, the arch-apostate saw arise the fears made by the Thunderer; but, though these fill'd him with terror, he strove to rekindle his boastful rage, and thus continued:

I watch'd on earth for the extraordinary birth of this divine infant. He will soon, said I, proceed from the womb of Mary. Then, swift as the rapid flash from the lowering clouds, or the thoughts of the gods, when wing'd with wrath, will he grow up towards Heaven.

In his exaltation he, with one foot, covers the sea, and with the other the earth. In his dreadful right hand he poises the sun and moon, and in his left the stars of the morning. He comes accompany'd by Destruction, in the midst of storms, which he has assembled from the whole universe, and rushes irresistibly to victory. Fly, Satan! Ah fly! lest, with his omnipotent thunder, he strikes impetuous, and having hurl'd thee through a thousand worlds, leaves thee senseless, and even void of life, in the immense abyss. Behold, these, ye gods, were my thoughts: but how far were they from the truth? He came into the earth a mere human being; a whimpering child; and, like the other sons of the earth, was no sooner born, than he mourn'd his mortality with infant tears. A choir of heavenly spirits, indeed, sung at his birth: for sometimes they descend to take a view of that earth where we rule with absolute sway, where viewing the graves and sepulchres of the dead, where once was Paradise, they, weeping, turn away their eyes; but soon, to assuage their grief, sing hymns of joy, and return to Heaven. This was now the case. They hasted back, and left the helpless infant; who then fled from me, while I suffer'd him to fly; for so cowardly an enemy was beneath my pursuit. Meanwhile my trusty vicegerent Herod, caus'd the infants of Bethlehem to be massacred; when the streaming blood; the dying shrieks of the helpless innocents; the agonies of the disconsolate mothers, and the odorous stream of the fresh mangled bodies, mingling with the ascending souls, render'd them a delightful sacrifice. It was I, Herod, who prompted thee to perform this exploit. Let not any inferior spirit claim this honour—an honour which I maintain is due to me alone. Let therefore that vain boaster, who here, in Hell, would deprive me of this glory, be silent. On the death of Herod the child was brought back from Egypt. His early years he pass'd in the lap of his fond mother, and amidst her embraces remain'd unknown. Afterwards no blaze of juvenile fire, no impulse of noble valour prompted him to exert his courage, and render

himself famous. He retired to the lonely deserts, and the dreary wilds, where he possibly might lay the plan of what, in future times, may threaten our overthrow, and again call us to exert our courage, our utmost vigilance. I, indeed, imagine, that he was rather employ'd in concerting some great project, than merely in viewing the fields, the flowers, and the children, with which he was surrounded, or in servilely adoring the Being who made the worms of the dust as well as him. At length he seem'd to assume a more distinguish'd character. One day, when bathing in the river Jordan, on him descended the glory of God in effulgent splendor. This I myself beheld with these immortal eyes. Bright it flow'd, as when it issues from the throne of Heaven through long ranks of adoring Seraphs. But why it thus descended, whether in honour of the earth-born child, or to observe the watch we kept, is difficult to tell. However, I instantly heard the rolling thunder bellow from the clouds, mix'd with these words; This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleas'd. Thus, to perplex my thoughts, Eloa, or some other of the heavenly host, utter'd these words: It was surely not the voice of God, at least far different did it seem from that, in which he impos'd on us the irksome task of paying homage to his favourite, the Messiah. Near Jesus was a sullen prophet, who, like a savage, rov'd among the rocks of the wilderness; and calling out to this pretended Saviour, said, Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world. Hail thou who wast before all worlds! from thee we receive grace for grace. God gave the law by Moses; but from the anointed of the Lord came grace and truth. How lofty! how prophetic! Thus when dreamers praise each other, they wrap themselves in a sacred obscurity; and then we, O ye immortal gods! are thought much too mean to be able to draw aside the fraudful veil. 'Tis true, the earth-born, of whom the prophet speaks in such lofty strains, hath already wak'd the dead; his mighty power,

remember it, ye princes of Hell, has call'd to life those, who, fainting under their pains, have been laid in their tombs—soon he is to raise the whole human race from Sin and Death: from Sin, who charms every heart, and reigns with such despotic sway: from Death, the offspring of the fair flattering charmer, will he also deliver them: though at my nod he has so often laid in the dust the whole creation of God. Ye souls who, since the formation of the earth, I have gather'd round me, as numerous as the waves of the ocean, or as the glittering stars: ye who lament in eternal night,—who, in that night, are tortur'd by penal fire;—in that fire by despair;—and in that despair by me; will then be as free from death, as the band of the adoring worshippers. We, it seems, are at length to degenerate, and crouching low, to lie prostrate before him. Thus what God's mighty Thunderer was unable to accomplish, this Dreamer is to produce. Presumptuous boaster! first deliver thyself, and then awake the dead. Thee will I lay pale and disfigur'd in the dust. Then to the eyes which see not, and which are clouded in perpetual darkness, will I say, Ah see, the dead awake! Then to the ears which hear not, and from which an eternal insensibility shall exclude all sounds, will I say, Hark! the fields resound with the call, Awake ye dead! And to the soul that has just taken its flight, and perhaps directs its course to Hell, will I call with the voice of a tempest, Make haste, thou who hast conquer'd death—haste to begin thy triumph! For thee a pompous entry is prepar'd—the gates of Hell open to invite thee in. The deep abyss resounds with shouts of joy—Thee, the gods, and the souls of thy fellow mortals, greet in triumphant songs. Thus in sportive strains he rav'd: then added, boasting: My great resolutions shall be executed, unless God draws up to Heaven the lessening earth, and with it the whole human race.—This Saviour shall die! he shall die! Thus shall I be both the father and protector of Death, and live unconquer'd through the ages of eternity—He shall die!—

Soon will I, before the face of the Eternal, scatter his mouldering clay in the way of Hell! This, ye gods! is my resolution.

Thus, in a voice hoarse and discordant, spoke the arch-apostate. The great Messiah was still among the lonely sepulchres, when the breath with which the blasphemer ended his impious speech, brought to the holy Jesus a fluttering leaf, on which hung a dying worm. The meek and humble Saviour gave it life; but at the same instant, horrors unutterable enter'd the bosom of the proud boaster. Behind the step of the high rais'd throne from which he vented his blasphemies, Hell sunk, and before it, Satan, from the terrors that seiz'd his mind, appear'd wrapp'd in the darkest gloom of night, while all the inhabitants of the dreadful abyss beheld him with motionless amazement.

At the lower part of the throne sat Abbadona in deep dejection, ruminating, with keenest anguish, on the past and the future. Before his face, which was deform'd by melancholy, internal anguish, and sad dismay, he beheld tortures accumulated on tortures, extending into eternity. He then look'd back to those happy times when he himself was a bright seraph, and the friend of the exalted Abdiel; who, on the day of the revolt, bravely vindicated the cause of God, and having zealously contended for the truth before the apostate legions, return'd to his Creator alone and invincible. Abbadona was near escaping with that heroic seraph; but being surrounded by the rapid chariots of Satan, and the bright bands of those who fell from their allegiance, he drew back, and though Abdiel, with looks of menacing love, chid his delay, and strove to hasten his escape from those reprobate bands, inebriated and dazzled with the delusive prospect of his future godhead, he no longer attended to the once powerful eye of his friend, but suffer'd himself to be carry'd in triumph to Satan. Now lamenting in pensive silence, he revolves the history of his once spotless innocence, and the fair morning of his days, when he came pure and happy out of the hand of his Creator. At once the

Almighty Source of Goodness form'd him and Abdiel, when fill'd with inborn rapture they thus address'd each other: Ah! beauteous form, what are we? Where, my beloved, didst thou first see me? How long hast thou—how long have I existed? Come, oh come, my divine friend, embrace me—Admit me into thy bosom—Let me learn thy thoughts. In the mean time came the glory of God, shining from afar with ineffable splendor, fraught with benediction. They look'd around and beheld an innumerable host of new immortals. A silver cloud then gently rais'd them to the Eternal. They saw their Creator: they call'd him their Father, and, enraptur'd, ador'd him as the Source of their happiness.

Abbadona, tortur'd by these thoughts, shed a torrent of tears, and now resolv'd to oppose the blasphemous speech of Satan, which had fill'd him with horror. He thrice attempted to speak, but his sighs stopt his utterance. Thus, when in a bloody battle two brothers are mortally wounded by each other's hand, at last, each to the other being mutually known, they are unable to express the strong sensations of their hearts, and sighs only proceed from their dying lips. At length Abbadona thus broke silence:

Though I incur the everlasting displeasure of this assembly, I will not refrain from speaking.—Yes, Satan, I will speak, that the heavy judgments of the Eternal may more lightly fall on me than on thee. O thou seducer, how I now hate thee! This essence, this immortal spirit, which thou hast snatch'd from its Creator, he will perpetually require of thee—He will require of thee this whole assembly of immortal spirits, by thee involv'd in ruin. Thou execrable deceiver, with thee I renounce all connection. How vainly dost thou boast of the mortality of man, which God himself has appointed, and which thou canst not prevent! I disclaim thine impotent project of putting to death the divine Messiah. Against whom, O spirit accurs'd! dost thou rave? It is against him whom thou art forc'd to confess is more mighty than thyself. Has not his irresistible thunder sufficiently

disfigur'd thine audacious front? Or cannot the almighty Father defend him against those, by whose delusions man became subject to death? Alas! in that crime I was an accomplice! But mad with rage, shall we put to death the great Messiah, and thus perpetually shut against us—us once so many pure and happy spirits, the entrance to future deliverance; or at least prevent some little alleviation of our torment? O Satan! as we all felt encreasing pain, when thou gavest the name of thy kingdom to these mansions of night and horrid damnation, so instead of triumph shall thou return with shame, from thine audacious attempt against God and his Messiah!

Satan heard him with impatient rage, and instantly, from the top of his throne, attempted to hurl at his devoted head one of the enormous rocks; but his destructive right hand dropp'd, shrivell'd and void of strength. Then stamping with impotent fury, three times his disappointed malice shook his whole frame, three times he cast a look of indignant fury at Abbadona, while his struggling passions stopp'd his voice. Abbadona, with an afflicted countenance, still stood before him firm and intrepid. Now spoke Adramelech, the foe of God, of man, and even of Satan.

Thou base and abject slave, cry'd he, I will speak to thee in dark storms, and will answer thee in a tempest. Darest thou presume to revile the gods? Dare one of the most grovelling spirits of Hell to rise up against Satan and me? If thou art tortur'd, thou slave, it is by thine own thoughts. Fly, thou pusillanimous spirit, out of our dominions, the abode of kings—Fly into the wide abyss of space, and there importune thy God to erect for thee a kingdom of new tortures, in which thou mayst live forever. But thou hadst rather perish—perish then, humbly adoring the object of thy terror. Come, thou who in the midst of Heaven knewest thy divine essence, and boldly attemptedst to dethrone the Almighty, the future Creator of innumerable worlds—Come, we will soon shew these contemptible spirits the terrors of our arm, by enterprizes that, like a storm, shall at once de-

press and blind them. Come, ye mazes of impenetrable guile, big with ruin, destruction and death. It is determin'd that the Saviour shall die: he shall not even save himself. There is no way for his escape; nor shall any guide deliver him from the labyrinth into which he shall enter. But should he even elude our stratagems; shouldst thou, who dwellest on high, enable him to escape, by enduing him with the sagacity of a god, yet fiery tempests, the agents of our wrath, shall soon take him from our sight—tempests like that with which we formerly attack'd the happy Job, the favourite of Heaven. Fly—fly from us, thou earth, we come against thee arm'd with all the powers of Death and Hell. Woe to him who, in our world, shall dare to oppose us.

Thus spake Adramelech; and now the whole assembly with unanimous tumult sided with Satan. The stamping of their mighty feet surpass'd the noise of falling rocks, and shook the deep profound. Inflated with their future triumphs, the hoarse roar of applauding voices reach'd the utmost confines of the dreary regions, all approving the infernal resolution of slaying the blessed Jesus: though an act like this, Time, since he first began his course, had never seen. Its curs'd inventors, Satan and Adramelech, with resolutions fell and malignant, descended from their throne; the steps, like brazen mountains, resounded under their feet, and the bellowing cry of war and victory accompany'd them to the gate of Hell.

Abbadona, who alone had remain'd unmov'd, follow'd at a distance, either still to persuade them from engaging in the dire attempt, or to behold the consequences of the dreadful deed. Now, with steps dilatory and slow, he drew near to the angels who guarded the gate. But how was he confounded, when he saw there the invincible Abdiel! sighing, he held down his head, and thought of retiring; then resolv'd to advance; then trembling and fill'd with perturbation, determin'd to fly into the immense abyss of space; but instantly collecting himself, he mov'd towards the seraph. His beating

heart spoke the terror of his mind: distressful tears, such as fallen angels weep, fell from his eyes: deep sighs burst from his agonizing breast, and a continual tremor, never felt by mortals, shook his whole frame. Abdiel, with an open tranquil eye, stood in fix'd attention, gazing up the bright stream of light, and with sweet serenity was viewing the distant worlds, form'd by the great Creator, to whom he had ever remain'd faithful. He saw not Abbadona. As the sun on his natal day pour'd his resplendent beams on the new-created earth, so shone the bright seraph; but the afflicted Abbadona felt no genial influences from his refulgent rays. Sighing, he cry'd to himself in plaintive voice, Abdiel, my brother! wilt thou forever shun me? Wilt thou forever leave me? —forever leave me in solitude, far from thee?—Oh grant me thy pity, thou child of light!—Wilt thou not, Abdiel, mourn for me?—Ah, he no longer loves me!—he will forever cease to love me! Whither, ye ever verdant bowers, under which, in high rais'd rapture and sweet delight, we talk'd of God, and the tender charms of friendship! Cease to flow, ye celestial streams, where we mingled the sweet embrace, and with unpolluted lips sung the praises of the Eternal—Abdiel, my brother, is forever dead to me! Thou Hell, my dark abode, eternal Night, thou mother of torments, join my lamentation! When the terrors of God nightly oppress me, may sighs and bewailing groans descend from thy dreary mountains!—Abdiel, my brother, is forever dead to me!

Thus unregarded, he, to himself, utter'd his complaints. He now stood fronting the crystalline stream of flowing light that leads to the mundane system. At first he was afraid of the brightness, and of the wing'd lightning, that seem'd advancing towards him. Immers'd in misery, and confin'd to solitude, ages had pass'd since he had seen the worlds. Now, standing pensive, he cry'd, Bless'd entrance! oh that I might pass thro' thee to those innumerable places, where the Creator displays his power and grace, and never more tread the dark kingdom of Damnation! Ye suns innumerable,

how much more resplendent was I than you, ye inanimate children of the Creator, when first, at his almighty voice, your glorious orbs began to roll! Now this gloomy mansion is my place of residence. I am an outcast, an object of abhorrence to the meanest spirits who maintain'd their allegiance to the Omnipotent! O thou Heaven, seat of purest bliss, the sight of thee fills me with remorse! In thy blissful regions I became a sinner —there I rose up against the Almighty. Thou immortal Repose, once my sweet associate in the bless'd vale of peace, whither art thou fled? Alas! thee I have forever lost, and my judge scarce permits to enjoy, in the midst of my gloomy horrors, the admiration of his worlds, those glorious structures that display his omnipotence and grace. Oh that I might, without shuddering, presume to call him my Creator! how willingly would I resign the tender, the endearing name of Father! how cheerfully forego the noble privilege of the seraphim of being call'd his children! O thou, who art my judge, dare I, abandon'd, implore thee to cast on me one gracious look, while thus involv'd in guilt—involv'd in woe! Ye dark thoughts, full of anguish, and thou wild despair, tyrannic rage!—forever rage!—Miserable that I am! Oh that I were but blotted from the creation!—Curs'd be the day when the Creator went forth in his glory, and call'd me into being—Yes, cursed be thou, O day! when the new immortals said, He also is our brother; Eternity—O Eternity! thou mother of endless torments! why didst thou bring it forth? And if it must still remain, wherefore is it not dark and horrid, like the eternal night when the mighty Thunderer, borne on a tempest, drove us through the void creation, laden with the anger and curse of the Omnipotent—But against whom, while doom'd to the horrid abyss, darest thou, blasphemer, complain!—Fall on me, ye suns, hide me, ye stars, from the fierce wrath of him, who from the throne of his eternal justice, both as my Enemy and my Judge, fills me with terror and sad dismay. O thou, who in thy judgments art inexorable, has eternity no

hopes in store for me? O divine Judge, Creator, most gracious Father!—Alas! again I offend—I blaspheme the Most High—I call him by names not to be utter'd by such an ingrate.—Yet all this he once was to me—He was once my most gracious Father—he would have been so still, had I, like Abdiel, my dearest friend, stood firm.—But I, alas! impious, ungrateful—I fly—but whither shall I fly?—Thus he spoke, and look'd, dejected, into the deep abyss. Then lifting up his eyes, glaring with wild despair, he resum'd:

O God, arm'd with destruction! create a fire,—a devouring fire that will destroy the spirits, which thou, without their consent, hast created immortal. In vain he call'd, no devouring flame appear'd: he then turn'd, and fixing his looks on the worlds, flew up, till spent with fatigue, he alighted on one of the most distant suns, whence he cast his eyes on the abyss beneath, where stars innumerable seem'd to press on stars. A wandering comet approach'd; already it smok'd, already its final period drew nigh. Upon it Abbadona threw himself, that he might perish with it: but still surviving, he sunk, oppress'd with irremediable anguish, as a mount, rais'd of the bones of those who in former battles fell, when shaken by earthquakes, slowly sinks.

In the mean time Satan and Adramelech approach'd the earth. They proceeded together, yet alone, each solely taken up with his own infernal thoughts. And now Adramelech descries the earth involv'd in distant darkness.

There, there it is, cry'd he to himself, while thoughts crowded on thoughts, as the waves of the ocean, when thou, far distant America, wast divided from three worlds. Yes, there it is. There I, as soon as I have got rid of Satan, or have obtain'd the glory of conquering him, shall sole reign, as the author of evil. But why, O earth! over thee alone? why not over those stars, whose inhabitants have been already too long happy? your orbs shall for me perform their courses. Yes, Death shall advance from star to star, and in sight

of the Eternal, extend his dominion to the utmost confines of the wide creation? Then shall I, not like Satan, successively destroy only single individuals of rational beings, but sweep away entire generations. Before me shall they lie grovelling on the earth, and writhing themselves with torment, in excruciating agonies expire. Then will I sit on this, on that, or the other star triumphant, and, sole monarch, cast my glad eyes over my infinite domain. Thou, Nature, whom I shall then have render'd the tomb of thy creatures, shall I delighted behold, while I, laughing, gaze on their corruption, in thy deep and endless grave. Even should the Eternal resolve to form other rational beings out of the dust of the tombs, I will bring them also to destruction. Thus shall my never-failing skill and intrepidity carry seduction and death from one star to another. Then shall I act like myself: and should I be successful in destroying spiritual beings, Satan himself shall perish, and his immortal essence evaporate like smoke. Under him no great and worthy action shall I perform. It is then determin'd. Spiritual substances shall be reduc'd to nothing. I will destroy them or perish: for that is better than to live and not reign. I will go and summon all my thoughts, which, like so many gods, shall assemble in order to form schemes of destruction. This is the time for performing what has eternally been the subject of my ambition. Now God awakes, and if Satan does not err, has sent a Saviour of mankind, who is to dispossess us of a kingdom we have so nobly conquer'd.—He is not mistaken; he who is call'd the Messiah, is the greatest of all the prophets. Yet I shall signalize myself by his overthrow, and all the assembled gods shall esteem me most worthy of the infernal throne. Or, what is still more suitable to my divinity, and more worthy of such an immortal being, I will first destroy Satan: a glorious exploit that will put an end to my servitude!—he shall be subdu'd, and then shall I reign supreme among the gods. What a mighty affair doest thou, Satan, make of killing only the body of the Saviour! This then

shall be thy task—This I permit thee to accomplish before thou thyself art destroy'd. I shall annihilate the soul: be it thy toilsome task to disperse the mortal dust.

Thus the proud boastful fiend maliguant rav'd; bewilder'd by his wishes in a maze of thought. The Most High, who sees through the darkness of futurity, heard him in silence. Adramelech, lost in meditations deep, insensibly wrapp'd himself in the gathering clouds.—His wrinkled front glow'd with rage and malice, and fury lower'd on his brow. At length, at the approach of night, being rous'd by the noise made by the revolving earth, he again join'd Satan, when both descending on the mount of Olives, they with impatient rage went in quest of the Messiah, and his faithful followers. As two murderous chariots rush into a valley, against the tranquil general of an enemy's army; and as from the lofty mountains are sent the embattled warriors, who with harsh uproar rush over the rocks, and spread afar the noise and thunder of death, so Adramelech and Satan descended the mountain.

THE

MESSIAH.

BOOK III.

The Argument.

The Messiah still continues among the sepulchres. Eloa descends from Heaven, and counts his tears. The souls of the patriarchs send the seraph Zemia, from the sun, to observe the words and actions of Jesus, while the darkness of the night prevents their seeing him. The Messiah sleeps for the last time, and while his disciples seek him about the mount of Olives, their guardian angels give Zemia their several characters. Satan appears in a dream to Judas Iscariot in the form of his deceased father. The Messiah awaking, comes to his disciples, and mentions their approaching flight. Judas, who had concealed himself, overhears the Messiah, and feels his mind distracted by contending passions.

THE

MESSIAH.

BOOK III.

HAIL earth! my native land, thee I revisit: thou shalt lay me in thy cool bosom among those who sleep in God: thou shalt softly cover these my bones. Yet let me hope first to conclude the sacred song of heavenly love. Then these lips which sung the gracious Friend of man, then these eyes which he has oft fill'd with tears of joy shall be clos'd. Then my gentle friends, with frequent gushing grief, shall encircle my grave with ever-verdant laurel, and the spreading palm; that my new-rais'd form, awak'd from death, may rise in heavenly splendor from the silent grave.

And thou harmonious muse of Sion's hill, who hast carry'd me to the gloomy regions of Hell, and safe hast brought me back, still trembling: thou, who in the divine countenance hast seen awful justice mix'd with radiant grace and love, pour on my enraptur'd soul celestial light, and teach her in lofty strains to sing the great Redeemer.

Jesus still remain'd with John, at the receptacles of the dead, among the scatter'd bones of human bodies, and surrounded by nocturnal darkness. He sat meditating on himself, the Son of the Eternal Father, sacrific'd for man. Before him pass'd in horrid form a numerous train of sins, those which since the creation had receiv'd their birth from the children of Adam; follow'd in awful pomp by those posterity shall still produce; an innumerable host, flying from the face of God, in the midst of

whom was Satan their chief and father, driving sinners from the sacred throne, and gathering them round himself. Thus the northern whirlpool, ever open to destruction, in circling eddies ingulphs the liquid plain, drawing into its deep abyss unwary mariners. Jesus beheld the black assembly in their native forms most hideous, not as when painted by the passions, they appear to man in the garb of lavish luxury and proud ambition, or as when to the lascivious eye they seem dress'd in smiles and wanton blandishments. The holy Saviour then look'd up to God. The father with awful countenance, also regarded him; but though the tremendous sentence was slowly breaking forth, grace inexpressible beam'd from his face. The seraphs say, the Father then silent dropp'd the second tear: the first fell with Adam's curse. While thus each the other view'd, all nature bow'd before them; full of awe and expectation, the world stood still, the stars stopp'd their courses, and Night gaz'd with all her eyes. The contemplating cherub in a calm cloud pass'd by. The seraph Eloa also riding in celestial vapours came down to earth, and having counted the tears of love, by the Redeemer shed for man, reascended towards the heavenly plains. John beheld him rise; for Jesus had open'd his eyes, and enabled him to perceive the seraph. He saw him, and stood amaz'd. Then with ardour embrac'd the Mediator, and, sighing, call'd him his Saviour and his Lord! enraptur'd he thus call'd him, and fill'd with joys inexpressible, continu'd the sweet embrace.

Meanwhile the eleven, who had long been depriv'd of the sight of Jesus, wander'd sorrowful at the foot of the mount of Olives, seeking him amidst the darkness of the night: one alone excepted, who no longer paid the same honour, or felt the same tender regard for the Messiah, as the others. Though fill'd with innocence and unspotted truth, they knew not the purity and sublime nature of their own souls: but they were better known to God. He had given them minds fit for receiving divine illuminations. Even he, who prov'd himself unworthy of the celestial

call, might also have receiv'd heavenly revelations, had he not afterwards impiously betray'd the blessed Saviour. For before the souls of the apostles dwelt in tabernacles of clay, golden thrones were prepar'd for them in Heaven, by those of the four and twenty elders. Yet one of these had been cover'd with clouds; they, however, soon dispers'd, and the bright throne again diffus'd effulgent splendor. Eloa then came forth, and with a loud voice said, This is taken from him, and given to one more worthy.

Their guardian spirits, twelve angels of the earth under the inspection of Gabriel, now ascended to the summit of the mountain, and with tender complacency, stood unseen, viewing those committed to their charge, while they, with eyes fill'd with anxious tears, carefully sought the divine Mediator. Instantly Zemia, an agile spirit, one of the four next in authority to Uriel, descended from the throne, and thus spoke:

Tell me, ye celestial friends, where is the great Messiah? sent by the souls of the fathers, I shall with awful silence accompany his steps, and with admiration observe all his words and actions. No holy expression, no sigh of compassion, will I suffer to escape unobserv'd: no look beaming comfort, no tear of soft commiseration, shall appear in his eye, unnotic'd. O earth! too soon dost thou withdraw from the view of thine ancient inhabitants, thy fields most lovely, where walks the glorious Prince of Peace veil'd in humanity. Too soon dost thou fly the day and Uriel's face, while the sun reluctant lights the other hemisphere. There no rising hill, no lowly vale, gives delight; for there the Saviour is not seen.

Orion, the seraph, Simon's guardian angel, then reply'd, Below among the melancholy sepulchres hewn deep in the rocks, near the foot of this mountain, stands the great Messiah rapt in meditation. Zemia beheld him, and remain'd in silent ecstasy. He still stood enraptur'd, while on their swift wings two fleeting hours pass'd over his head; two hours since the calm silence

of the night began. Then the last balmy sleep descended on the eye of the Mediator; for sacred repose, issuing from the divine sanctuary, was sent by the almighty Father in a gentle breeze. Jesus slept. Zemia then turning, enter'd into the midst of the spiritual assembly, and in the voice of friendship, thus spake:

Tell me, ye celestial friends, who are those I see roaming on the mountain dejected and forlorn? Over their faces hovers sympathizing grief, ever graceful, when, as here, there appears a noble mind. They, perhaps, lament some dear departed friend, virtuous like themselves. These, O Zemia! Orion reply'd, are the holy twelvē, whom the Messiah chose for his disciples. Happy are we in being selected their guardians and friends. Thus we continually behold their divine Master, and hear, how he, with sweetest lips of sacred love, opens to them his heart: how he dispenses his instructions: how in sublimest converse, he introduces them to the knowledge of celestial mysteries, or in parables shews thee, immortal Virtue, in all thy native lustre. Thus impressing his image on their hearts, he forms them for the glorious employment of leading man to the bright regions of immortality. Oh how much do we learn from his instructions! how vigilant are we render'd by his bright example! and how are we allur'd to accompany him in fervent adoration of the Source of all good, the supreme Father of angels and of men! O Zemia! wert thou but daily to behold him—wert thou but witness to his divine friendship, his humility, his exalted piety, thine heart would overflow with silent rapture. Delightful is it also to the immortals to hear his disciples converse of him, like us, in affectionate effusions of love. Often, O my friend! have I said to these my companions, and I again repeat it, that I have frequently wish'd to be of Adam's race, and to live with man in a state of mortality, if mortality can be without sin. Perhaps I might then more truly honour the Messiah: perhaps I should feel a more ardent affection for my brother, born of the same flesh and blood. With what rapture might I then deliver up

my life for him who had dy'd for me! While stain'd with my warm innocent blood I would praise him; and then my faint sighs, my dying accents, would sound in the ears of the Most High, with no less harmony than the lofty strains of Eloa, when he stands before the throne. Then, Zemia, thou, or one of these my friends, would, with invisible hand, gently close my eyelids, and conduct my departed soul to the Eternal King.

Greatly, O gentle seraph! reply'd Zemia, am I mov'd by thy words. How hast thou incited me to join in thy wish to be the brother of man! Those I there behold are then the holy twēlve, the Messiah's chosen friends, an honour which a seraph might well wish to obtain, by becoming mortal. I salute you, his disciples: ye are worthy of immortality. You the Redeemer loves as brethren. Ye shall sit with your Lord on golden thrones to judge the world. O ye seraphim! I would hear the names already recorded in the book of life. Say first, who is he that with quick eye looks around, and now penetrates the thick grove, perhaps with impatient eagerness looking for Jesus? In his countenance methinks I see the traces of a bold and determin'd mind. Tell me the thoughts and emotions of an heart that seems susceptible of the strongest impressions.

This, reply'd the seraph Orion, is Simon Peter, one of the greatest of the disciples. Me has the Redeemer chosen his guardian angel. Thou, O Zemia! hast judg'd rightly: he is all that thou sayst. Shouldst thou see him when full of fervour, he is listening to the voice of his gracious Master; or when absent from him, and no longer under his eye; or when sleeping, he, in his dreams, beholds his Saviour; thou, O seraph! wouldst admire the sensibility of his heart, and think it still more divine. Lately Jesus asking his disciples, whom they thought him, Peter answer'd, with tears of joy, Thou art Christ, the son of the living God. But, O that I had not heard the Messiah say to Peter, Thou wilt deny me thrice! how dreadful the prediction! Ah Simon, my brother! didst thou hear him, and if thou didst, what—

oh what were the thoughts of thine heart? boldly didst thou reply, I will never deny thee—thee my Redeemer and my Lord. Yet Jesus again repeated the dreadful words. Oh didst thou but know how this fills me with soft compassion, thou wouldst indeed, as thou hast said, rather die than deny thy kind and gracious Lord. Thou knowest how Jesus loves thee. For then didst thou observe, that while he thus spake, he beheld thee with eyes full of divine sympathy and grace. Fain, O Peter! would I hope, that thou wilt not basely deny thy Lord.

The seraph Zemia heard him with deep concern, and reply'd, Is it possible that he should be so void of gratitude and love, as to disown his Saviour, his faithful, his divine friend! what honesty and truth shine in his face! But who is he, on whose open countenance is painted a glow of virtue and a detestation of vice, inexorable to the slavish sinner who knows not God? is he not Peter's friend? how closely he attends him! he converses with him, with all the familiarity of fraternal affection.

Sipha, his guardian angel, answer'd, Right, O seraph! is thy conjecture. That is Andrew, Peter's brother. They grew up together from tender infancy, under my care and that of Orion. Often have I, when his fond mother was affectionately embracing my infant charge, moulded his heart, to render it capable of receiving the perfect love he was afterwards to feel for the Messiah. When Jesus saw him as he stood by Jordan's silver stream, he was one of the disciples of John, and still in his retentive ear resounded the words of that holy prophet concerning the Mediator, whose coming was at hand. Jesus, with a look of benignity, call'd him. I was present. I beheld a divine fire pervade his breast; he felt the heavenly impulse flash upon his soul, and instantly flew to his Saviour.

Now spake Libaniel, Philip's tutelar angel, and said, He, O Zemia, whom thou seest fill'd with social friendship for those two brothers, is Philip. A smile of benevolence adorns his placid countenance, and the invari-

able desire of loving as brethren, all whom the Most High created in his own image, is the ruling passion of his godlike mind. The great Creator has also tipt his tongue with mild persuasive eloquence. As at the wakening morn the dew distils from Hermon, and odours breathe from the spreading olive, so sweet discourse proceeds from the lips of Philip.

But who, said Zemia, smiling, is he that with slow step walks among the cedars? on his face glows a noble desire of fame. Behold, he appears like one of those immortal sons of Sion, who consecrate their sacred works to posterity, and live in fame from generation to generation. Their glory uncoufin'd, becomes boundless and eternal; it sometimes passes from star to star; and when they, enraptur'd, compose hymns of God and his Messiah, we, O ye seraphs! aid the aspiring strains, and sing them in the Heavens.

That, said the seraph Adona, is James the son of Zebedee. His noble ambition is solely directed to divine objects. His grand pursuit, to be glorify'd before the whole human race, at the great and solemn day, when the Lord of Life shall awake the dead, and pass sentence on the sons of man. To his exalted soul, less honour would be ignominy. On his seeing the Saviour, in a rapture of joy he ran to meet him; as if already triumphant, he flew to behold him seated on his exalted throne. I saw him when on Tabor's hallow'd mount, Moses and Elias, sent of God, appear'd to the Messiah. Lo, bright and glowing clouds encompass'd and overshadow'd them. Jesus was transfigur'd: his face shone more bright than the sun in its meridian lustre: he was array'd in silver light. As in the holy of holies Aaron the high priest hasted to the glory of God, to the ark of the covenant, and to the mercy seat, so, enraptur'd by the honour of beholding this pomp of celestial splendor, James flew to admire and contemplate the glorious appearance. He of all the holy twelve, is to be the first martyr. Thus say the tables of prescience. He is therefore soon to enter triumphant on the ample theatre of

the eternal state, and to quench the desires of his longing soul, in the unutterable delights of never-ceasing felicity.

Simon the Canaanite, whom thou beholdest sitting, said Megiddon, his tutelar angel, was once a devout shepherd whom Jesus call'd from the field. His innocent and peaceful life, with his meekness and simplicity of manners, has gain'd the heart of his Lord. Jesus coming to him on a journey, he, with hospitable speed, kill'd a young lamb, and with assiduous care attended the welcome guest, transported with the honour of entertaining in his low cottage the Prophet of God. Not less grateful was his repast to the Messiah, than that he and the two angels receiv'd from Abraham in the plains of Mamre. Come, O Simon!—come, and follow me, said he, with benignity in his look—follow me, and leave thy flocks to thy companions. I am he, of whom thou, when a youth, heardst the song of the heavenly host by Bethlehem's limpid stream.

There is my beloved charge, said Adoram, the seraph. Behold James the son of Alpheus. That grave and awful countenance is expressive of the modest virtue which consists not in words, but in practice. While conscious that he was known to God, though sensible that he should be disregarded by man; forgotten by posterity, and overlook'd by us, his celestial friends, he would still persevere in his exalted piety and steady virtue.

Umbriel then stood forth, and stretching out his hand to Zemia, said, He whom thou seest musing in the depths of that tall grove, is Thomas, a zealous disciple. His mind is continually rapt in meditation, thoughts frequently produce thoughts without end, and extend before him, like a boundless sea. He was once almost lost in the dark system of Sadducean dreams: but was sav'd by the mighty miracles of the Messiah. Then leaving the mazy labyrinths of entangling error, he came to Jesus. Yet still, hard of conviction, he would fill me with solicitude, did I not know that with his active mind, he has sincerity of heart, and an ardent love of virtue.

Yonder, said the seraph Bildai, is Matthew, who was educated in the soft luxurious lap of pleasure. His wealthy parents accustom'd him to the sordid employments of those who, unmindful of their immortal souls, are as insatiably bent on accumulating shining ore, as if they were to live eternally on this heavy globe: but on his seeing the blessed Jesus, the hidden powers of his mind expanded: at a nod from Christ he follow'd him, leaving his employment, which had press'd him down to the earth, to the grovelling souls who have no taste for the more substantial treasures of heavenly wisdom. Thus a brave hero, when call'd to hazard his life for his country, breaks from the charms of some fair princess. He enters the field. There the Most High array'd in justice, guides the battle, and directs the hand of death. The great commander, rather call'd by the voice of injur'd Innocence, than the trump of Fame, shall receive the joyful acclamations of those he has deliver'd; for just is his war, and if in the midst of slaughter, he remembers that he himself is a man, we will chant his name before the Eternal.

Siona, the seraph, then said, that amiable old man with silver locks, is Bartholomew. He is under my care. Observe his devout and engaging countenance. There sacred virtue delights to dwell. By his practice its severities will be render'd more amiable and acceptable to mortals. Thou, O Bartholomew! shall gather many to Jesus. They shall see thy glorious end, and be struck with thy fortitude, when thou, in the sweat of death, shalt smile on thy murderers, and on thy brethren, with the tranquillity of a seraph. Then, ye celestial friends, you will join with me, in wiping the blood from his face, that all may behold his triumph over death, and fill'd with admiration, turn to the Lord.

That meek and humble disciple, said Elim, is my Lebbeus. Few have such tenderness and sensibility. When I call'd his immortal spirit from those regions, where souls reside before their union with the body, I found it by a stream which, murmuring like the distant

sound of sighs and plaintive moans, creeps along the vale. There, as angels relate, Abbadona lamented as he return'd from Eden, after seeing the mother of mankind, who had lost her spotless innocence. We also well know, that there the seraphs oft bewail the souls intrusted to their care, when after adorning their juvenile years with fair religion, and sanctity of manners, they unhappily blast their blooming virtues, and despising the nobler pleasures which Heaven approves, become infatuated with the false, the shadowy allurements of vice. Alas! how dreadful will be their fate! the angels lament their fall with sighs of pity, and shed tears; such as cannot fall from the eyes of mortals. There I found the soul of my dear Lebbeus, shrouded in tranquil clouds, and listening with faint perception, to the sound of pensive murmurs. These, where the stronger feelings of the senses prevail, are disregarded. Yet when his soul, cloth'd with light, enter'd the body, a slight perception of the melancholy murmurs still remain'd, sufficient to impress the mind in its first formation. Soft in the bosom of a fleecy cloud, I gently convey'd the unimbodied spirit to the dwellings of mortals. At length his mother brought him forth in a grove of palms. I descended invisible from the top of the rustling branches, and cool'd the infant with refreshing breezes: but even then, at the gloomy sensation that he was born to die, the number of his tears exceeded that of other mortals. He pass'd his youth in tender sorrow, weeping at the tear shed by a friend, and sympathizing in every woe of his fellow creatures. Thus, soft and compassionate, has he pass'd his time with Jesus. How am I griev'd for thee, O Lebbeus! At the death of thy Lord, thou, his devout disciple, wilt sink under the burthen of thy grief. Ah! support him, thou gracious Redeemer! strengthen him in that hour, thou who pitiest mankind! Behold with faltering step he is wandering towards us in deep affliction. Here, seraph, of him thou wilt have a nearer view, and face to face see the softest and most tender soul.

While Elim was yet speaking, Lebbeus silently join'd them. Quick the circle of assembled seraphs widen'd to admit a mortal. So the vernal breezes move before Philomela's plaintive strains. They now encompass him, and full of affection, stand as man with man. Lebbeus thinking himself alone, and unobserv'd, lift up his join'd hands, and with gestures of distress, indulg'd the transports of his grief, crying, Nowhere can I find him. Already one dismal day—already two tedious nights have fled, and we have not seen him! Ah, his cruel persecutors have at length found and seiz'd him! I, forsaken, live, though Jesus is dead! Thee have sinners barbarously slain, and yet I did not see thee die!—Thine eyes with gentle hand I have not clos'd! Say, ye cruel men! where did ye murder him? To what dreary desart, to what barren wild, to what gloomy sepulchre, did ye, inhuman, drag him, to take away his life? Ah where, my divine friend, dost thou lie? It is among the dead, pale and disfigur'd! The tender grace, the heavenly smile of thy compassionate looks, these murderers have stolen!—Thy servants have not seen thee die! Oh that this heart—this oppress'd heart, might cease to beat!—that my soul, form'd for anguish, might, like that dusky cloud, fly into the night of death, that I might there meet my Lord! Spent with watching, I will lie down and indulge this sleep that comes upon me.

Thus lamenting, he sunk into the arms of sleep. Elim cover'd him with the slender branches of the olive; fann'd his languid face with gentle breath; pour'd on his head life and balmy slumbers, and, while he slept, presented to his mind a dream, in which he walk'd conversing with his Lord.

Zemia hung over him full of benevolent sympathy, when a disciple appear'd coming from the gloomy grove before the sepulchres. Tell me also, said he, who is he that ascends the mountain? His raven locks fall in curls on his ample shoulders, and a manly beauty appears amidst the austerity of his countenance; while his head rising supereminent above those of the other disciples, completes

the dignity of his appearance. But may I, my celestial friends, presume to say, that if I am not deceiv'd, I perceive in his countenance, traces of the strongest agitations of mind, and something that to me appears mean and sordid. He is, however, a disciple, and will one day come with Jesus in the clouds of Heaven to judge the world.—But whence, O ye immortals! is this silence? Will none of you, my celestial friends, condescend to answer me? Ah, why do you still continue silent? Have I form'd a mistaken judgment of this disciple, and does that give you pain? Speak—oh speak—I own my fault. And thou, holy disciple, be not offended. When thou shalt enjoy the honour of suffering martyrdom for the truth, and shalt enter in triumph among the immortals, before these seraphs will I atone for my offence, by the most cordial friendship.

Ah Zemia! must I then answer thee? said Ithuriel, sighing, and advancing towards the seraph.—Ah my friend, must I speak? Better it would be for us both, were I to observe, on this subject, an eternal silence:—Yet I will answer thee. He whom thou seest is Judas Iscariot. I would not, O seraph, lament over him—unmov'd, and without one compassionate tear, would I behold him. With pious indignation would I avoid the guilty wretch, had he not been bless'd with a heart form'd for every virtue, and pass'd his youth unpolluted by crimes—had not the Messiah himself thought him worthy of my care, when his life was pious and holy, and irreproachable. But alas! now he—To add more, would be heaping sorrow on sorrow! Ah! now I know why, when in the presence of the Most High, we were discoursing on the souls of the disciples, Eloa, the seraph, on receiving a sign from the Supreme, descended mournful, and instantly envelop'd in clouds one of the lofty golden seats, set apart for the twelve disciples, near the Eternal. Oh that thou, Judas, hadst never been born! Oh that no seraph had ever mention'd thine immortal soul! Better—infinitely better would it have been for thee never to have seen the light, than for thee, ungrate-

ful traitor! to betray thy Lord, and profane the glorious, the sacred office to which thou wert call'd.

Thus spake the seraph Ithuriel, and with downcast look stood before Zemia, who reply'd, I shuddering sympathize with thee, and darkness, like that which precedes the dawn, overclouds my eyes. Judas, one of the twelve, and thy charge, O Ithuriel, profane the office of a disciple, and dishonour the gracious Mediator! this none of the immortals could have believ'd. Yet, what is his dreadful crime? What has the abandon'd done, before Jesus, and thee, and the celestial spirits? freely tell me, though my heart, O Ithuriel! tremble at the recital.

O seraph! Ithuriel return'd, he hates John, because Christ loves him with greater tenderness than any of his other disciples. And—(fain would he conceal it from himself) he hates the Redeemer! In an unhappy hour, dishonest avarice took root in his once noble soul: For this is not the vice of youth. Blinded by this base, unsocial passion, he imagines that John will be preferr'd by the Messiah before the other disciples, and more especially before him, to collect the treasure; the heavenly treasure, the first fruits of the unbounded wealth of his new kingdom. Thus does he speak of it; and this, oft have I heard him murmur with rancorous heart, when in his lonely walks he thought himself unobserv'd. Once—(long will the horrid image hover in my sight, and fill my heart with silent gloom) Once in the vale of Benhinnon, full of inquietude, he gave vent to the agitations of his mind, uttering the most malignant and impious wishes. Deeply affected, I cast down my eyes, when instantly I beheld Satan leave him, with an air of bitter mockery and triumphant smiles; and then passing by me, gave me a look of arrogant contempt. At present the heart of Judas is so torn by the storms of guilty passions, that I dread lest each black thought, each fell emotion of his wicked mind, should hurry him to swift perdition. O that thine omnipotent hand, O God, had held Satan bound in adamantine chains in the abyss

of deepest darkness! that the immortal soul thou hast form'd for eternal glory, might recover from her errors, and seize the precious remaining hours; that, worthy of her high birth, and the creative voice by which the Almighty call'd her to immortality, and consecrated her to the discipleship, she, invincible and fearless, might resist the furious destroyer, with the courage and intrepidity of a seraph. But, O thou supreme Wisdom! thou Source of Goodness! be not offended at my wishes: whatever thou doest, is wisest, most just, and best.

Dearest seraph, cry'd Zemia, what says the Mediator? —ah, what does the gracious Mediator say to his lost disciple? Can he still see near him the criminal? Does he yet love him? and if he does, oh! how does he shew his compassion?

Zemia, constrain'd by thee, said Ithuriel, I must reveal all that I would gladly conceal from myself, from thee, and from the angels. Unworthy as he is, Jesus still loves him. Full of assiduous affection, not in words, but by looks of the most divine benevolence, he lately, when all the disciples were present, said, Thou art he that will betray me! Zemia, see he approaches, I will retire. I can no longer bear to look upon the ingrate. Follow me. Thus saying, Ithuriel hasted away. Zemia went with him, and Salem, a young seraph, who was John's second guardian, follow'd them at a distance: for God had given to John two tutelar angels, the chief of whom was Raphael, one of the most exalted seraphs.

Zemia and Ithuriel now went to Jesus at the sepulchres. There Salem, with radiant countenance, join'd them, and, with a look of cordial affection, gave them the tender embrace. A mild joy shone in Salem's face, and a youthful smile play'd in his features. As the opening gates of a delightful vernal morn was his sacred mouth, which pour'd forth the sweetest harmony, and from his lips flow'd eloquence in soft and mellifluous accents.

Ye seraphs, compose your minds, said he; there, with Jesus in the tombs, is John, the most amiable of all the

disciples. Cast your eyes on him, and you will no longer think of Judas. Devout as a seraph, he lives with the Messiah as one of the immortals. To him the Redeemer opens his heart; and him has he chosen his chief confident. As the friendship of Gabriel and the exalted Eloa, or as the affection Abdiel once felt for Abbadona, while living with him in native innocence, is the friendship that subsists between John and his divine Master. Of this he is worthy: for of all the souls of men, the Creator never form'd one more pure and heavenly than that of John. I was present when the immortal essence came forth, and beheld a resplendent rank of young celestial spirits, thus, in flowing numbers, hail their companion:

We salute thy coming forth, immortal friend! holy offspring of the breath divine, we salute thee! Beauteous and loving art thou as Salem, as Raphael heavenly and sublime. From thee pure sentiments will flow as dew from the purple clouds of the morning, and thy humane heart—thy heart, fill'd with tender sensations, shall melt, as the eyes of the seraphim, enraptur'd at the sight of virtue, overflow with sweetest transport. Fair daughter of the breath divine, faithful sister of the soul which once, in its unspotted youth, animated the first of men, we will now conduct thee to the body, thy companion, which smiling Nature moulds for thee in proportions just and lovely. It will be beautiful, like the body of the Messiah, which soon the Divine Spirit will form, and which, in manly grace, shall exceed all the sons of Adam. In this thy tender and amiable frame, thy virtues will be prov'd, till the fair habitation of clay shall be destroy'd. It shall then moulder in the dust; but at last thy Salem will seek and awake thee; and if thou hast faithfully perform'd thy task on earth, will conduct thee, array'd in celestial beauty, to the embraces of thy Messiah, coming in the clouds to judge the world. Thus, enraptur'd, sang the juvenile spirits of Heaven.

Salem ceas'd. He and the other seraphs, fill'd with softest affection, remain'd near John. Thus three bro-

thers encompass a beloved sister, who, in blooming beauty, resembles the fair immortals, while she, with mind untroubled, sleeps on the new-blown flowers. Alas! she knows not that her worthy father draws near the end of his virtuous course! With this distressful news her brothers came; but forbear to molest her placid slumbers.

Meanwhile the other disciples, spent with inquietude and fatigue, had fallen asleep: one lay shelter'd by the low bending arms of a spreading olive; another in a valley, encompass'd by eminences on all sides, gently rising; another at the foot of a lofty cedar, which with soft rustling sounds shed from its waving top, gentle dew and soft repose. Some slept in the sepulchres built by the children of the sanguinary city, in honour of the prophets murder'd by their fathers: while Judas Iscariot, weary'd by the perturbations of his guilty mind, lay near the gentle Lebbeus, his relation and friend.

Satan, who in a secret cave had listen'd to the characters the angels had given of the disciples, now burst forth furious, and with fell purpose of dire destruction approach'd Judas. So in the midnight hour the pestilence silent invades some sleeping city. Death on expanded wings hovers round the walls, breathing poisonous vapours. While the city rests, the sage, still wakeful, sits with his friends, refin'd in sentiment, under the shade of a leafy bower, regal'd with cheerful wine. Sober Temperance fills the glass, and adds an innocent alacrity to their sublime converse on the charms of friendship, the nature of the soul, and its endless duration. But soon approaches the day of lamentation. Soon Death, with hollow eyes and countenance terrible, spreads far and wide his baneful influence. Then is the night of torments and of groans, of heart-rending sighs, and gushing sorrow. Wringing her hands, the tender bride bewails her dearer half, the partner of her soul. Then the distracted mother, whose agonizing heart is depriv'd of all her little fondlings, curses the day of her birth and theirs. Then even the unfeeling grave-digger stands aghast; trembling, he joins the crowding dead,

and drops into the pit himself had dug. From the clouds that envelop the top of high Olympus, the angel of death with pensive brow descends, and beholding a desart waste lying in dreary silence, stands on an aspiring tomb deep musing.

Thus on Judas, Satan descended with sudden destruction, and presented to his waking fancy a seducing dream. Quick he enflam'd his throbbing heart with fell sensations; thoughts big with rage and furious storms. Thus the red bolt of the heavens, falling on mountains of sulphur, kindles the ready materials; then new and subterranean thunders roar, and through the caverns the spreading tempest rolls. For high mysteries, and thoughts apt to enflame the souls of men, were, for his greater condemnation, not unknown to Satan. Soon careful Solicitude brought back the seraph Ithuriel to stay by his wretched charge: but perceiving Satan hovering over Judas, he trembling stopp'd; then looking up to the Almighty, resolv'd to awake him from his sleep. Thrice, with the wings of a storm roaring among the cedars, he swept over his face: thrice he pass'd by him with sounding steps, that made the summit of the mountain shake. Yet Judas continued as in the sleep of death. To the dreaming disciple Satan, in the form of his father, appear'd with disconsolate looks of grief and perturbation; and with trembling accents, fraught with guile, thus spake:

Dost thou here sleep, Judas, careless and at thine ease? still dost thou continue absent from Jesus, as if thou knewest not that thou art the object of his hatred, and that all his other disciples he prefers to thee? why art thou not continually near him? why dost thou not attempt to regain the favour of thy Lord? Good God! what fault have I, what crime hast thou committed, that I should be oblig'd to leave the region of death to lament the melancholy fate of thee, my son? Ah, dost thou suppose that thou shalt enjoy greater happiness in the new empire Christ is to erect? how miserably art thou deceiv'd! Peter and the favourite sons of Zebedee, will be

greater and more mighty than thee! treasures in a full stream shall flow to them from the spacious land. All the others too, shall receive from the Messiah a much more splendid inheritance than my unhappy son. Come, Judas, I will shew thee his kingdom in all its glory. Rise with me: be not dismay'd; but arm thyself with courage. Now thou seest before thee that endless chain of mountains, which cast their lengthening shades into that fertile valley. There gold shall be incessantly dug; gold, bright and glittering as that of Ophir: while the valley shall through the prosperous year pour forth a rich exuberance of blessings. This is the delightful inheritance of the favourite John. That hill, cover'd with pendant vineyards, and those wide-spreading fields, cloth'd with waving corn, the Messiah has given to Peter. Seest thou all the opulence of that smiling country, where cities rising in lofty splendor, each like Jerusalem, the king's daughter, glitter in the sun, and with their innumerable inhabitants extend along the vale. Behold how those cities are water'd by the limpid streams of a new Jordan, which passes through noble arches in the lofty walls. Gardens, resembling fertile Eden, wave their blushing fruit, over the golden sands, on its happy shores. These are the kingdoms of the other disciples. But now, Judas, my son, observe that far distant mountainous country, wild, stony, and cover'd with wither'd shrubs. How barren, how desolate! Above it rests Night in cold and drisly clouds, and beneath, on the tops of the eminences, a sterile depth of ice and northern snow. That, O Judas! is thine inheritance. In those gloomy regions thou, and the birds of night, thy companions, are condemn'd to wander solitary among the aged oaks. With what haughty—with what contemptuous airs will the happy disciples look down on thee! they will pass by thee without condescending to observe thee! Ah, Judas, thou weepest with indignation!—but in vain thou weepest!—in vain are all thy tears, while, surrounded with despair, thou neglectest to help thyself! yet listen to me, thy father, and I will disclose

to thee my heart. Thou knowest the Messiah delays the promis'd redemption; the Jews are still in subjection; and he does not appear in haste to erect his new and glorious empire. Thou art also sensible, that the great are most averse to submit to the authority of the Nazarene king, and daily contrive his death. Do thou, therefore, deliver him into the hands of the priests, not to revenge his hatred to thee; but that he may the sooner overwhelm them with irremediless infamy and confusion, and thus be oblig'd to found his long expected empire. Thou wilt then, as now, be the disciple of a dreaded master; and wilt the sooner obtain thine allotted portion. This thou wilt also sooner improve by labour and industry, by tillage and trade, so as to give it some little resemblance to the more fertile inheritances of thy companions. Meanwhile of this thou mayst be certain, that the grateful priests will reward thee for delivering up Jesus, by giving thee a part of their riches. Now, Judas, follow the advice of thy troubled father. Thou canst not be deceiv'd. View me well, and observe my pale and faded visage. But thou awakest. Despise not my admonitions. I have now pointed out the means of thy deliverance, let me not then return melancholy and dejected to my abode among the souls of the dead.

Satan having ended, with haughty mien stood over him erect and tall. Thus rises a mountain, late a valley, when convulsive earthquakes, rock the neighbouring eminences, and sink the surrounding hills. Judas awoke. Furious he started up, crying, Yes, it was he—it was the voice of my deceas'd father!—Thus he spake—thus he look'd, when before my eyes he gave up the ghost, Ah! it is then beyond all doubt that Jesus hates me! the very dead know that he hates me! Wretch, what thou hast apprehended with fear and trembling, the souls of the dead now declare. Well, I will haste and put in execution my father's advice.—But, with what treachery shall I then act towards the Messiah! may not this vision be owing to the disgust that rankles in my heart? may it not be suggested by Satan? Hence, ye grovelling, ye

timorous surmises! I already feel that I am inflam'd with the desire of riches—with the impatience of revenge! O my soul! why art thou so tender, so scrupulous? visions present themselves before thee—visions enjoin thee revenge.—The command of a vision sanctifies the deed.

Satan heard him thus speak—him who had previously offended the Almighty, by staining his soul with base and ignoble passions. He heard him with pleasure, and glorying in his success, rais'd his head still higher, and unseen, look'd down on Judas with triumphant arrogance. Thus on the top of high Olympus, a dreadful rock impends o'er the swelling sea, proudly threatening destruction to the approaching mariners; but soon will the red lightning, with hideous roar and terrible confusion, strike it down, and lay it in the lowly deep. The islands will see its fall, and exult in the avenging thunder. Satan, now leaving Olivet, with lofty strides stalk'd unseen over Jerusalem, and repair'd to Caiaphas, who slept in his still silent palace, by delusive visions, to infuse into the wicked heart of the enemy and high-priest of God, emotions still more vile. Meanwhile, Judas continu'd on the mount, wrapp'd up in thoughts malignant as his soul.

The day was rising on the slumbering world when Jesus awoke, and with him John. Together they walk'd up the mount, whence they saw the disciples still asleep. Jesus then taking the devout Lebbeus by the hand, said, I, my dear friend, am here, and still alive. Up sprang the transported disciple, and embrac'd him with tears of joy. Then running to the other disciples, awak'd them, and brought them to their divine Master, when, affectionately gathering round him, he, with a gracious smile, thus address'd them.

Come, my pious friends, this day will we rejoice before we exchange the last embrace. Still the heavens, from the early cloud, shed the refreshing dews on this favour'd land. Behold the towering cedar, planted by my Father's hand, affords her cooling shade; and still I

behold man, form'd after the divine image, walking with the immortals. But this will soon be no longer seen. Soon will the darkning sky be wrapp'd in gloomy clouds. Soon will the earth with dire convulsions tremble, and this land, so replete with blessings; this long-favour'd region will become desolate. Soon will man look on me with murderous eye, and soon will ye all fly from me, your Lord. Weep not, O Peter! and thou, my tender, my affectionate disciple, be not afflicted: for while the bridegoom is present, no grief is felt by the bride. Ye shall see me again at the resurrection—ye shall see me with all the raptures with which a mother recovers her only son.

Thus he spake, but while his face was illumin'd with grace and love, his heart was fill'd with keenest anguish. He then descended the mount, accompany'd by all his disciples except Judas, who, standing in the thick shade of tufted trees, had heard the Saviour's speech, and looking after Jesus, who walk'd away with quick step, said, He himself already knows that a day of darkness hangs over his head. He is therefore not ignorant of the manner in which he will treat his persecutors, and accomplish the great work he has begun. He then knows my design—knows that I intend to betray him. Yet should I be deceiv'd—should my dream prove an illusion, and hated as I am, did it come to increase my torment?—Ah! curs'd be the hour in which I clos'd my eyes, and the apparition of my father appear'd to my view! May shrieks resound through the mountain!—May dying groans deepen the horror of the mouldering sepulchres!—Curs'd be the place where I lay! There may an unnatural son murder his father! May it be defil'd by the blood of my nearest friend, slain by his own desperate hand!—But why do I thus rave? Why give way to such gloomy ideas? Why do I feel this inward conflict? Why am I thus at variance with myself? It is not my fault if I am deceiv'd. But dost thou, hoary, visionary sage, enjoin me to commit a crime, by betraying the Messiah?—him whose precepts—whose example I have

profess'd to follow—him whom I ought to love and reverence? May the day—that fatal day, be curs'd, when Jesus chose me—when full of love, and with a look of benevolence he said, Follow me! May it be cover'd with clouds and the gloom of night! May the pestilence walk in darkness, and destructive diseases slay in the heat of noon! Let no man name thee! Mayst thou be forgotten of God!—But whence this agony—this secret horror? Why, my bones, do ye tremble? Why am I so pusillanimous? Why do I thus torment myself? I will rouze my courage, and shake off these weak foreboding fears. My sight did not deceive me, and if it did, can I by any other means accomplish my desires? Thus he rav'd: Meanwhile, since his vision, he had advanc'd two dreadful hours nearer to eternity.

THE

MESSIAH.

BOOK IV.

The Argument.

Caiaphas assembles the Sanhedrim, relates his dream, and proposes the death of Jesus. Philo, a Pharisee, supposes the dream a fiction, but joins, with great vehemence, in recommending the death of Christ. They are warmly opposed by Gamaliel and Nicodemus. Judas has a private conference with Caiaphas. The Messiah sends Peter and John to prepare the passover. Peter sees Mary the mother of Jesus, Lazarus, Mary his sister, Semida, and Cidli, coming in quest of Jesus. The pious love of Semida and Cidli. Mary proceeds in search of Jesus, who stops at the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, near Golgotha. He proceeds to Jerusalem, and is met by Judas. Ithuriel, no longer able to continue that traitor's guardian angel, is made Peter's second angel. Jesus institutes the memorial of his death. Judas goes out. Jesus prays with his disciples, and returns to the mount of Olives.

THE

MESSIAH.

BOOK IV.

TERRIFY'D by a vision, and tortur'd by anxiety, Caiaphas lay restless on his bed. Sleep fled from his eyes, or if for a few moments they were clos'd by slumber, he suddenly started, and agitated by his tumultuous thoughts, furiously turn'd. Thus in a field of slaughter, a dying reprobate, harden'd in guilt, rolls in agony: The approaching victor, the prancing steed, the harsh din of arms, the shouts of the enemy, the groans of the dying, and all the thundering roar of war, distract his mind. Cover'd with ghastly wounds he lies, and seems to sink in wild stupidity among the dead. Then, again reviving, he curses himself, curses God, and would fain disbelieve his being. Thus lay Caiaphas, and thus he rose; ordering the priests and elders of the people to be suddenly assembled. In the midst of his stately palace was the hall of the Sanhedrim, built of the spoils of Lebanon's lofty forest, with all the magnificence that was seen in the works of Solomon. Thither came the priests and elders. Among the latter was Joseph of Arimathea, who, supereminent in wisdom, did honour to the posterity of Abraham. Serene as the placid moon, riding in lucid midnight clouds, he repair'd to the assembly. Thither also came Nicodemus, a friend to the Messiah and to Joseph. Then enter'd Caiaphas with proud step, and with a countenance enflam'd by rage, thus spake:

Now, ye fathers of Jerusalem, we must take our final resolution, and with powerful arm destroy our adver-

sary, lest he destroying us, this be the last time in which we assemble in this holy Sanhedrim. This divine priesthood, instituted by the great Jehovah himself on mount Sinai, and reveal'd to us by the greatest of all the prophets —This divine priesthood, which has continu'd through all the succeeding ages, and which neither the towers of Babylon, nor formidable Rome, seated on her seven hills, could ever destroy, a wretched visionary, O Israel! is ready to abolish. To our shame, he has been suffer'd to declare with impunity, that he will destroy the temple of the Lord. Is not all Jerusalem his? Are not the cities of Judea servilely devoted to their idoliz'd Prophet? The people, grown blind and superstitious, shun the temple of their wise forefathers: they flock to remote desarts, to gaze at his seducing miracles—miracles in which he is only the agent of Satan. What can more effectually blind—what fill with greater amazement the stupid vulgar, than his raising the dead?—or rather, awaking the sick from sleep? Yet we still continue in supine indolence, waiting, perhaps, till his adherents rise in arms, and in some dreadful tumult, murder us before his face, that he may shew his power in restoring us to life! Is it possible, fathers, that you can thus sit in silent astonishment? that ye can yet entertain a doubt? Yes, ye incredulous, ye doubt—but doubt now, and sleep forever. Ye know with what rebellious shouts Judea has hail'd him king. Never before were the ways so spread with the branches of the palm. Never did the air resound with such loud hosannas. It were indeed to be wish'd, that instead of those triumphant acclamations, thou hadst heard the curse of the Eternal: that instead of those repeated hosannas, thine ears had been deafen'd by the voice of thunder: that deep in the mansions of death, kings had risen from their iron thrones, and laying their crowns at thy feet, had, with bitter and insulting mockery, saluted thee with those pompous sounds. Ye degenerate and unworthy fathers of the people (pardon these expressions, which proceed from a mind inflam'd with holy indignation)—not prudence alone, but God

himself orders us to cut him off from the face of the earth. In ancient times Jehovah spake to our fathers in dreams: Ye yourselves shall judge, whether, upon this extraordinary occasion, your high priest has not had a dream from God.

Behold, at midnight, when anxious I lay on my bed, revolving in my mind what might be the issue of the late tumults, I dropp'd asleep. When lo! I found myself in the temple, preparing the sacrifice of atonement. Already the blood stream'd before me: already, with solemn awe, was I entering the Holy of Holies, when drawing the veil aside—My bones still tremble!—still the terrors of God overpower me!—O ye fathers! I beheld Aaron in his sacred vestments, with a menacing brow, advancing towards me. Holy anger flash'd with insupportable blaze from his eyes, and the piercing rays which beam'd on me from his breast-plate, shone refulgent, like Horeb; while the wing'd cherubs over the ark of the covenant, flutter'd dreadful!—My ephod, reduc'd to ashes, instantly fell to the ground. Fly, thou disgrace to the priesthood, cry'd Aaron in the voice of terror—fly, miserable that thou art, and no more presume to degrade thy sacred office, by appearing here as priest of the Lord. Art thou the high priest of the great Jehovah? (Here he gave me a furious and vengeful look, like that of a man who suddenly sees his mortal enemy, whom he is resolv'd to slay)—Art thou the high priest of the great Jehovah?—Art thou vested with that sacred office?—thou who, criminally supine, canst see that impious seducer, with impunity, profane the holy sanctuary; make a mock of my brother Moses, of me, and of Abraham; and allow him to violate the Sabbath of God? Go, most miserable! lest on thy longer stay, the mercy-seat of the Eternal should consume thee with sacred fire.

At these words I fled. My hair was dishevell'd. Ashes were on my head. Terrify'd, frantic, and without my vesture, I ran forth to the people, who, enrag'd at the sight, attempted my life. Here I awoke. Three hours full of unutterable anguish—three hours most hor-

rible, I lay, after this dreadful vision, as in the agonies of death. Still I tremble—still my heart beats with terror—still is my faltering tongue unable distinctly to perform its office. He must die. From you, fathers, I expect a speedy determination on the manner of his death.

Here Caiaphas was silent: but after a short pause, he resum'd. Better is it that one should die, than that all should perish. But in this let us act with prudent caution. Let it not be at the feast, lest the infatuated populace should attempt to save him. Caiaphas ceas'd.

No sound, not the least murmur was heard throughout the full assembly. Is if struck dead by the flash of the heavens, all sat silent and motionless. Joseph observing the solemn stillness, resolv'd to speak in the defence of Jesus, but was restrain'd by the fury with which Philo, a dreaded priest, stepp'd forth. Too proud to deliver his sentiments, before affairs were ripe for their being put in execution, he had never yet publicly mentioned Jesus. Great was his character for wisdom, even with Caiaphas, whom he hated: for he himself was a Pharisee. His heavy hollow eyes were fill'd with malignant fury, and with rapid and resentful voice, he thus began:

Caiaphas, in vain dost thou pretend to have receiv'd a vision from God, as if thou didst not know that the Eternal never appears to the voluptuous sensualist, and that no spirits convey revelations to the hypocritical Sadducees, who disbelieve their existence. Either thou amusest us by a fiction, or thou sawest the vision; but can the Most High stoop so low as to appear to thee? If the first be the case, thou here shewest thyself worthy of thy Roman policy, and thy purchas'd priesthood: if the latter, thou, the high priest of God, oughtest to know, that the Almighty, to punish those who violate his laws, permits their being deceiv'd by lying spirits. Thus, that Ahab, the slave of Baal and of Jezabell, might perish, and the blood of the murder'd Naboth no longer cry for vengeance, an angel of death steps forth from the throne, and dictates false prophesies to the prophets. When be-

hold, the rolling chariots bring back the king mortally wounded. He dies. His blood defiles the field where Naboth was slain. There God himself stands, and there in his presence, the angel of death sheds the blood of the royal offender. Thy dream indeed, enjoins the punishment of our adversary. Yet no dream hast thou had, but what has been furnish'd by thy fertile invention. Dost thou not tremble at naming the angel of death? perhaps one of that order already waits before the eternal throne, for thy blood, O Caiaphas! destin'd soon to be spilt. I plead not for the seditious Jesus, neither do I hold him innocent. Compar'd with the Nazarene, thou art a less offender. Thou art only a disgrace to the priesthood of God; but he would abolish it. This Jesus has been weigh'd in the balance, in which criminals, however powerful, even the proud conquerors of nations, are found wanting. He has been weigh'd, and is doom'd to certain death. He shall therefore die. With these eyes I will see him expire: they shall behold his pale and bloody corpse. The earth of the hill on which he suffers, I will carry into the Holy of Holies: or at the great altar, lay stones stain'd with his smoking blood, as an everlasting memorial. But how base is thy fear, O Caiaphas! that would warp us into cowardice, and make us stand in awe of the giddy rabble. This mean pusillanimity was never learnt from our forefathers. Let us then hasten to prevent the thunder—God's avenging thunder: lest it should not destroy him alone—lest our eye-balls roll in death, while they behold his last agonies; and we expire, defil'd by being near him. Did the Tishbite fear the people, when he slew the priests of the sleeping Baal, whom all their tempestuous clamour could not awake? or was his confidence encreas'd by the sacred flame descending from Heaven? but though we should be assisted by no descending fire, I will go forth to the people, and woe to him that shall dare to oppose me, and once presume to say, that the blood of the dreaming visionary is not an acceptable oblation to the great Jehovah! At a sign from me the multitude shall

join in stoning him. Before the eyes of all Judea—before the face of the Romans, shall the rebel die: then shall we secure and triumphant sit in judgment, and enter the sanctuary of God rejoicing.

Philo then, with uplifted hands, advanc'd into the midst of the assembly, where stopping, he, with loud voice, made this malignant and profane exclamation: Blessed spirit! wherever thou art, whether cloth'd in heavenly splendor, thou sittest with Abraham, and assemblest about thee the prophets; or whether thou condescendest to visit the congregations of thy children, and to walk among mortals—O Spirit of Moses! to thee I swear, by that eternal covenant, which thou, by the Divine command, broughtest from the fiery tempest, that I will take no rest, till he who hates thee is number'd with the dead!—till with my hands, full of the Nazarene's blood, I come to the high altar, hold it over my hoary head, and wave it as a thank-offering before the Lord.

Thus he spake, and strove to believe, that the heart-searching God does not detest such whited sepulchres. Yet his conscience call'd him hypocrite. He felt the just reproach: but full of inflexible rage, with undaunted eye stood before the council.

Meanwhile Caiaphas lean'd on his golden seat, trembling with indignation. His face glow'd with a fury too great for utterance, and he continu'd silent with his eyes fix'd on the floor; when the Sadducees observing his discomposure, with tumultuous violence rose up against Philo. So in the field of hostile slaughter, the foaming steeds of an iron chariot obtain the reins, when the whizzing lance, with quivering flight, strikes the rider, who with mouth disgorging blood, falls under the wheels. Then neighing fierce, they threaten with their flaming eyes: they snuff the wind, and striking the earth, it trembles under their feet. The enrag'd assembly would have instantly broke up, had not Gamaliel arose. Serene wisdom sat on his amiable countenance, and stretching out his hand, he, in graceful accents, thus spake:

O fathers! if in this tumultuous heat of fiery rage, calm and sober reason may be suffer'd to appear, and you are not enemies to prudence, I entreat you to hear me. Should the eternal quarrel be again reviv'd—should the discordant names of Sadducees and Pharisees produce a perpetual animosity between you, how will you be able to destroy the Prophet? but God has probably sent envy and variance among you, in order to reserve to his supreme justice the office of pronouncing sentence on the Nazarene. Let us, then, O ye fathers! leave to the Eternal the vindication of his own cause. You may be too weak to wield his thunders, and those mighty arms at which the Heavens themselves tremble, may sink you into the dust. Be ye silent therefore before the Most High, and, with calm submission, listen to the approaching Judge. Soon will he speak, and the earth from the rising to the setting sun shall astonish'd hear his voice. If God speaks to the storm, and says, Do thou tear him in pieces! and to the tempest, Do thou scatter his bones, like the dust, and disperse them among the four winds! or to the glittering sword, Arm the avenging hand, and drink the blood of the Sinner! If he says to the abyss, Open thou, and receive him into thy bowels, then is he a guilty visionary. But if, with unexampled power and grace, he continues, by his heavenly miracles, to diffuse happiness over the earth; if by his means the blind, exulting, lifts up his face to the great luminary of day; or with enlighten'd eyes, with filial fondness gazes enraptur'd on his father, who kindly led him along his darksome way—(Forgive me, if struck by actions great like these, I, in your opinion, speak more highly of him than I ought)—if the deaf ear again hears the benediction of the priest, the song of the bride, the lamentation of the mother, and the sacred hallelujah; if by him the dead walk, witness against us, and first lifting their new awaken'd eyes towards Heaven, turn them with pious indignation on us, shew us their tombs, and threaten us with the judgment seat, at which they have already appear'd; or if, (in which he seems still more divine) he

continues to live among us without reproach, and by his astonishing virtue, such godlike miracles are wrought, I conjure you, O ye fathers!—by the living God, I conjure you to say, whether we ought to condemn him—whether we ought to fight against God. Here Gamaliel ceas'd, and, with an air of dignity, return'd to his seat.

The sun now from his meridian height, spread his rays over Jerusalem. At the same time Judas was drawing near, in order to lay his proposal before the Sanhedrim. But first Ithuriel and Satan went thither, and both invisible stood among the priests, where, without being seen, they survey'd the crowded assembly.

Nicodemus sat, and silently survey'd every face. Each member of the court appear'd like the self-condemn'd sinner, when, pale and trembling, he hears the thunder roll awful o'er his head. Even Philo and Caiaphas seem'd struck, confounded, and disturb'd by Gamaliel's words. Nicodemus beholding them with a mixture of contempt and fear, arose. Sweetness and benevolence were visible in his look, while an air of solemnity and grief were mix'd with that noble dignity, that arises from an approving conscience. His eye, which faithfully express'd the situation of his mind, mourn'd and conceal'd not its tears. He believ'd in Christ, and resolv'd to acknowledge him before his most inveterate enemies. After a moment's pause, lifting up his hands, he thus spake:

Blessed be thou, O Gamaliel! blessed be the words of thy lips! the Lord hath appointed thee his champion, and a two-edged sword hath he put into thy mouth! thy speech hath divided asunder our bones, which still shake! still do our feeble knees fail! darkness still covereth our eyes, and still God is seen wielding the thunder of his wrath, to strike those who oppose his will, into the dust from whence they sprang! O Gamaliel! may the Most High, who taught thee this wisdom, who hath endu'd thee with such magnanimity, be thy protection! may the Messiah, the sent of God, be thy Saviour, and the Saviour of thine offspring! But ye, the persecutors of

the great Prophet of God, I cannot bless—not thee, Caiaphas—not thee, Philo—For you I mourn—and if the voice of sorrow can find an entrance into your hearts—if tears of compassion, streaming in behalf of innocence, can move ye—these tears also implore your pity for spotless virtue! Know, ye fathers, that the sacred blood being once shed, it will lift up its prevailing voice, like a tempest!—it will call—it will rise to Heaven—to the ear of the Eternal! He will hear it: he will descend, and give judgment without mercy, to those who have shewn no mercy, by inhumanly slaying his holy Prophet. O Judea! Judea! where is thy Messiah? if he be no where to be found, the arm of God will, throughout all thy land, destroy the men of blood, who have put to death the Holy One of Israel!

Nicodemus here hung down his head, and weeping, return'd to his seat. Still Philo sat with menacing eyes, and trembling with impotent rage, which his pride struggled in vain to conceal. Disorder'd by the conflict of contending passions, his eyes became dim, night hover'd round him, and darkness hid from his sight the whole assembly. He was ready to sink: no other relief could he obtain, but by his giving fresh motion to his congealing blood, by venting his thoughts. He made the effort. The spirits pent up in his high-swoln heart, flush'd in his face, and starting up furious, he rush'd forward. So when on inaccessible mountains an approaching tempest terrific hangs, one of the black clouds, surcharg'd with lightning, kindled for destruction, bursts single, and while others strike only the tops of the aspiring cedars, that, arm'd with a thousand thunders, rolls with repercussive roar through the whole etherial expanse, the mountainous forests blaze, and splendid palaces are reduc'd to extensive heaps of ruins. As Philo advanc'd forward, Satan beheld him, and within himself thus whispering said:

Let thy speech be devoted to me: rapid and impetuous let it flow as the floods of Hell: terrible as the flaming sea: impassion'd as the lofty sounds with which

I dispense my orders to the damn'd: rancorous, and with fury, as the gods of the deep utter their complaints to the immense mountains of the fiery abyss, when the streams of flowing sulphur stop to listen, and glow with a more livid blaze at their execrations. Thus Philo speak, and lead in triumph thy captive hearers. Let thine heart give vent to ideas, such as Adramelech himself would not blush to own. Speak death to the Nazarene. Thy recompence expect from me. At the sight of his blood, thy whole soul shall overflow with such joys as Hell affords. And when thou comest to us, I myself will be thy conductor, and introduce thee to those heroic spirits, who delighted in carnage, and in spreading desolation all around. Thus spake Satan, unheard of all but Ithuriel.

Philo, standing with eyes lift up towards Heaven, cry'd, Thou altar of blood, where the lamb of atonement was offer'd, and ye other sacred altars, once loaded with undefil'd sacrifices, which sent up to God a sweet smelling savour! even thou Holy of Holies! ye cherubs, angels of death! thou mercy seat, where the Eternal once sat, and from the sacred darkness pronounc'd sentence on the sinner! thou temple of the Lord, fill'd with the divine glory! and thou, O Moriah! where the voice of Jehovah was heard! when the Nazarene shall lay ye waste, and these sons of Belial, by him protected, shall bring you to destruction, let me—let me be esteem'd guiltless of your ruin. When our children, with anxious looks, and trembling knees, wringing their hands, seek the God of their fathers, and do not find him—when they in vain seek the Lord, because the Nazarene has erected his throne, where Jehovah himself resided above the cherubim! let it be known, that of this I am innocent. If idolaters bring polluted incense to the sacred place, where hung the veil, where once the high-priest alone went with humble reverence to the mercy seat! may my afflicted eyes never behold the impious deed!—may God rather close them in death, than permit them to see this abomination of desolation fall on his people! All in

my power will I do to avert the impending evil. And, hear me, O God of Israel! if ever from thy lofty throne thou heardest the petition of a mortal, prostrate in the dust of this lowly earth—if at the command of Moses the earth swallow'd up Corah, Dathan, and Abiram—if at Elijah's prayer, fire descended on the messengers sent by the king, and consum'd them from the top of Carmel—hear me, O God of Israel! while I curse them who revile thee, and defend the foe of thy prophet Moses. May thy end, O Nicodemus! be like the end of the impostor, and thy grave like the grave of the Sower of Sedition!—May it be among the graves of the murderers, who were ston'd at a distance from the temple and the altar. When thou diest, may thy heart be harden'd!—may it be obdurate and inflexible! may not God suffer thee to weep, lest weeping thou shouldst turn to him! for thou hast wept for the impious, and thy servile eye, in opposition to the Eternal, has shed profane tears. Thou too, O Gamaliel! hast espous'd the cause of the Seducer. May a horrid gloom—may black darkness cover thine eyes, then mayst thou wait in vain for relief from the Nazarene, and pine away with fruitless grief! may deafness close thine ear, and horror thy life: then lie till the Nazarene awake thee—till thou rot. And if thou hast declar'd to the stupid herd who, like thyself, idolize this pretended Saviour, that he will raise thee up, may that many-headed beast trample on thy grave, and mock both thee and thy prophet. When thy soul, divested of its covering of flesh, stands trembling before the judgment seat to hear her sentence, then, O God! stretch out thy dreaded arm, and strike the apall'd sinner—strike also Nicodemus, and fulfil on both the curse I, for thine honour, pronounce. But reserve thy fiercest anger, before which the mountains tremble, and all Hell is dismay'd, for a still more guilty sinner—Wrap thyself in ten thousand thunders, then go forth, and strike the Nazarene. I have been young, and now am old, yet have I continually worshipp'd and ador'd thee after the manner of our fathers; permit not then, O God, my

dying eyes to behold the Nazarene triumphant. Should he conquer, thine eternal covenant, thine holiness, thine oath, and the blessing thou gavest to Abraham and his posterity, are all vain—are all annull'd. Then will I, before all Judea, renounce thy laws and ordinances—then will I live without thee—without thee will I lay my drooping head in the silent grave. If thine arm doth not cut off the Impostor, never didst thou appear to Moses! The burning bush at the foot of mount Horeb was all an illusion! Thou didst not in tremendous state descend on the top of Sinai, nor did the trumpet sound, nor the thunder roar, or the mountain shake! Then both we and our forefathers from time immemorial, have of all the nations upon earth, been the most worthy of pity! For no law came down from Heaven, and thou art not the God of Israel!

Here Philo, with wrathful countenance, return'd to his place. Nicodemus stood with down-cast eyes, like one who, patient under oppression, experiences in his own breast all that dignity and elevation of sentiment, which arises from conscious virtue and purity of heart. Gravity sat on his face, and in his soul was Heaven. The godlike man was fill'd with awful thoughts, and revolv'd in his mind the solemn night when he discours'd with the Messiah on mysteries sublime. While the Saviour spake, enraptur'd, he beheld his heavenly smile, his look of grace, the more than human lustre of his eyes: he saw the display of paradisaical innocence, the lofty, the resplendent traces of the Son of God. This now fill'd him with silent ecstasy; he was too highly bless'd to be afraid of man. Elevated by a flaming ardour, an heavenly awe, to himself he seem'd as if standing in the presence of God, before the assembled race of man at the general judgment. On him were fix'd the looks of the whole assembly. His eye serene, fill'd with the irresistible fire of awful virtue, terrify'd the sinner, who beheld him enrag'd. His air commanded attention, and he thus began:

Happy am I, that with these eyes have seen the Mes-

siah! Happy am I, in having beheld the Hope of Israel! the Deliverer, whom Abraham, while solitary walking in the grove of Mamre, oft long'd to see! whom David would, with joyful transport, by his prayers, have brought down from the arms of the Father! whom the prophets with holy tears long'd to behold! but whom God gave to us the unworthy! Thou, the First-born of the Father, full of grace and truth, didst divide the Heavens, and come down to bless thy people. Yet these term thee a Visionary and a Sinner, O thou guiltless!—thou most innocent!—who are they that thus defame thee? When didst thou invent lying visions? when was thy soul polluted by sin? Did not the divine Jesus stand before the assembled Israelites, when thou, O Philo! wast present? didst thou not then hear him cry aloud, Who among you is able to convict me of sin? Where, Philo, was then this furious wrath—those lips, slanderous and profane? why didst thou and thy surrounding companions stand speechless? why at first did an universal silence reign, and every ear remain fix'd in expectation? There were seen faces full of rapturous joy, while others were fill'd with anxious fear, dreading lest some should step forth, and witness against him. How awful was this silence!—this suspense! But when among the innumerable multitude none stepp'd forth—when none could find cause of accusation against the great Prophet of God, suddenly the voices of the applauding people on all sides ascended to the skies, while with the loud acclaim Moriah shook, and the woody summit of Olivet trembled! Then flock'd to him the once blind and dumb, and with an effusion of joy, return'd him their grateful thanks. Then the numberless crowds, he had before miraculously fed in the desarts, hasted to bless this Friend of man. Then was heard among the people the loud voice of the youth whom, at the gate of Nain, he had restor'd to life. Oh more than Man! cry'd he, thou Son of the living God! the hand I stretch out to thee was once stiff! These eyes that weep—that weep at seeing thee, O thou divine—were clos'd! This soul, which ex-

ulting, is fill'd with fervent love, had quitted its fleshly abode! They were carrying me to the tombs of the dead! But thou to these stiffen'd limbs—to these clos'd eyes, didst life and animating heat impart! Again, I saw the earth and sky, and by me stood my trembling mother! —Thou call'dst back the departed soul!—They carry'd me not to my tomb!—Thou art more than Man! thou art not a sinner! Save me, thou Son of the Eternal God! thou the promis'd Seed! the Joy of thy mother! the Joy of the earth, by thee redeem'd!

Thus he spake, while Philo, with down-cast eyes, sat poring on the ground. Then after a moment's pause, he resum'd, Why, O Philo! didst thou silent stand before all Judea?—Yet why need I here relate these events!—ye already know them. Hadst thou, Philo, eyes to see —hadst thou ears to hear—wert not thine understanding wrapt in darkness, and thine heart plung'd in the gall of bitterness, long wouldst thou have known him to have been the Son of the Eternal Father! or wert thou too stupid for this, thou shouldst have stood in awe of God, and have reverently waited in the dust, till the Judge of the whole Earth had justify'd him from Heaven, or sent destruction on his head. O Religion, thou offspring of God! thou sacred friend of man! fair daughter of Truth! sublimest teacher of celestial Virtue! best blessing sent from Heaven! immortal like thy divine parent! lovely as the angels of God! and sweet as the eternal life! Thou art the creatress of elevated Sentiments; the mother of pure Devotion; or, as a seraph has nam'd thee, thou art Excellence inexpressible, when thy lucent beam descends into the noble soul! But in the minds of the proud hypocrite, and of the wicked bigot, how art thou transform'd! thou art then the daughter of the first incendiary! a priestess that delights in massacres and blood! No longer bear'st thou thy native lovely form; fair as light, most meek and humble! thou then art black as everlasting night, and smear'd by the blood slain by thy murderous hand! Thou art an hideous fiend that hoverest over altars, smoking with human victims!

Thou, presumptuous, stealest the thunder reserv'd by the Sovereign Judge for his own use! Thy foot stands on Hell! thy head, menacing, towers to Heaven! Thou teachest the wicked to murder thy best friend, him whom thy divine offspring sang before thou appear'dst among men!—But—O Religion!—Religion! dost thou breathe murder? dost thou delight in slaughter? dost thou animate the breast of the assassin?—No. Some spirit of Hell assumes thy name!—some spirit of darkness wears thy garb, to fulfil the councils of the damn'd.—O Religion, ever fair and lovely!—O Religion, most injur'd! actions like these are far from thee, thou offspring of the God of grace and mercy! thou fountain of peace! and salvation! thou sweetest charm of life!—of death!—of Heaven!—

My soul is enflam'd with pious ardour, yet while rapt in the contemplation of this amazing subject, I am fill'd with pity for you. An abhorrence, mix'd with compassion, seizes my soul, while I reflect on your insensibility to every humane, every generous sentiment: that you have render'd yourselves unable to distinguish between religion, and the thirst of blood: that your dark minds can scarce discern the bright beams that irradiate the fair form of amiable Innocence! But little doth Innocence regard her not being seen of you, while she is seen by the pure Source of all Good, and by the enraptur'd spirits of Heaven! Innocence will not fear, though condemn'd by the abject sinner, while seraphs stand and admire, and the Eternal, seated on his lofty throne, smiles benignant. Oh when the sons of earth rise and witness against her, how little, how contemptible do they appear! But what appearance will they make, when standing before the whole assembly of the awaken'd dead?—when all the host of Heaven shall witness against them!—when the loud voice of a cherub shall call the saints they have persecuted!—when the Lord himself shall speak, and lead them triumphant into glory! How will they then, seiz'd with horror, call to the hills, to hide them! to the mountains, to fall upon their heads! to the sea, to overwhelm

them with its waves! and to desolation, to reduce them to nothing! that they may be hid from those they have unjustly condemn'd, and not meet the eye of the dreaded righteous! that they may be hid from the tremendous wrath of the mighty Judge, who will espouse their cause!—

Strengthen me, ye lofty ideas of the solemn, the universal judgment! May ye be to me as the mount of God, to which I may fly, when—O my dying Lord! thy last look strikes through my soul!—Too plainly do I already feel the strong emotions that will then swell my heart! When I think of thy approaching death, a two-edg'd sword seems to glitter over my head.—In vain, ye lofty ideas of the coming judgment, do ye elevate my soul—a full heart, swell'd with grief like mine, attends not the awful trump. Shalt thou die?—thou divine—thou who, when young, I have carry'd in these arms, and clasp'd to my heart, with silent joyful admiration? Men, distinguish'd by their wisdom and learning, with amazement gather'd round thee, and improv'd by thy discourse! Even legions of celestial spirits issu'd from the everlasting gates, and descended to hear the words of thy mouth: then, enraptur'd, return'd singing thy praise. Behold, thou commandest the tempest, and the tempest rejoices to obey. The storm is hush'd. Thou risest and walkest on the waters: before thee they sink: before thee the swelling mountains become level plains.—Thus thou treadest on the fluid waters.—The heavens see thee walking on the liquid deep!—Shalt thou die?—Yes, if such be the sacred decree of the Eternal, thou shalt die—If the Most High, has resolv'd not to interpose, but to suffer these most impious to dip their guilty hands in thy sacred blood—thou shalt die! But I will weep over thy grave. I will go to the holy brook of Bethlehem where Mary bore thee.—There will I bewail thy death! —there will I die!—I will lament over thee, thou best of all the human race! thou Son of God: thou Angel of the Covenant! thou Prince of Peace. May my tomb be near to that of the righteous Jesus—near the bones that rest in peace and safety, to awake to life eternal!—

Yet why do I delay to leave this assembly? Guiltless and undefil'd I leave it—God has heard me—me who am pure from shedding innocent blood! Now thou Judge of the earth, call me to thyself! for I have no part in the council of sinners.

Having thus spoke, he for a few moments stood silent, and then with a countenance serene as that of the happy seraph, cry'd, Philo, thou cursest me; but thee I bless. This I have learn'd from my Lord and Saviour, whom thou wouldst slay—For thou wouldst slay gentle Mercy and forgiving Grace. Listen, oh listen to my advice, and know him. When thou standest on the brink of death—when the innocent blood thou hast spilt terrifies thee, and overflows thy soul like a deluge—when thy revengeful voice echoes back, and pierces thine ear like a tempest—when thou shalt seem to hear around thee, amidst the darkning gloom of encreasing horrors, the footsteps of the Most High, preceded by the trumpet's terrific sound: the stroke of the glittering sword whetted for destruction: the fiery arrows drunk with the blood of the cruel: then will thoughts, far different from those that now employ thy mind, rush on thy soul. Thou wilt then in the bitterest agonies, and with the most doleful cries, bowing and wreathing thy limbs, supplicate thy Judge, and implore his mercy; and then—then in that awful and tremendous moment of expiring nature, may God hear thy supplications, pity thy tears and thy groans, and regard thee with compassion!

He then pass'd through the crowd, accompany'd by Joseph. The seraph Ithuriel, seeing the godlike Nicodemus leave the assembly, rose with extended wings, and enraptur'd hover'd in the air. His eyes beam'd with resplendent joy; and a heavenly smile adorn'd his face. So one of the celestial host, fill'd with divine love, and extatic rapture, stands on one of the blooming hills that encompass the eternal throne, while Elon, in the divine presence, joining his melodious lyre, sings the rewards of virtue, and the ecstacies of friends meeting in the blissful regions: Meanwhile the listening angel is lost in ad-

miration. The speaking strings, in sounds mellifluous, swell with higher, and still higher strains, while each thought rises on thought, till he spreads his golden wings, and rising, flutters enraptur'd, dissolv'd in joys unutterable. Thus hover'd Ithuriel, while to himself he said, O human race! with what blessings shall ye be crown'd, if after the great Redeemer's death, ye rise to sublime perfection, and each Christian resembles this righteous man! Regardless of Satan, he suffer'd him to hear his words. The arch-apostate perceiv'd his ecstasy, and felt with pain the triumph of the towering seraph, who ascended towards Heaven. Nicodemus, addressing himself to Joseph, as they left the assembly, cry'd, My dear friend, thou seem'st cover'd with shame! This pierc'd the soul of Joseph; for already he had secretly lamented his timid silence, and now trembling, and unable to speak, he left Nicodemus, and fill'd with inward anguish, lift up his humbled eyes with grief towards Heaven.

When Nicodemus retir'd, the whole assembly were struck with profound consternation; for he had transfix'd their souls, and fill'd them with the deepest wounds. They then strove to benumb the internal sense of pain; but on the great, the decisive day of judgment, these wounds shall open and bleed afresh; eternally bleed; and no longer shall they be able to stifle the secret monitor within. All were now silent; and the council was suddenly rising, when Judas—the detestable Judas enter'd. Wondering, they saw him pass through the crowded hall, and, with a compos'd air, approach the high-priest, who, with wicked joy, inclin'd his head to hear him, and then admitted him to a private audience. This being ended, Caiaphas return'd to the council, and said, Some there are in Israel who bend not the knee to idols. This man is one of his disciples, and yet he has the courage to adhere to the ordinances of our fathers. He deserves a reward. Judas took the silver, and, transported at the honour done him by the pontiff, walk'd with an arrogant air of dignity out of the council. The reward indeed appear'd to him too small; but he flatter'd

himself with the hope that it would be greatly enlarg'd, when, by his zeal and activity, he should carry his treachery into successful execution. Philo, however, with a look of hatred, view'd the disciple pass along; for he was secretly vex'd, that one of the lowest of the people should have a share of the honour which he had propos'd to arrogate entirely to himself. Yet on his return, the dissembling hypocrite gave him a smile of approbation, and continu'd looking at Judas till he had left the assembly. Thus the first of murderers, with a look of mockery and triumph, follows with his eye the ambitious conqueror rushing into the battle. It was he that taught him habitual cruelty, and bid the idle dream of everlasting fame flutter at his heart, and sparkle in his eye, while the verdant laurel seems to sprout around his brow. Already the din and tumult of the arm'd field sounds delightful in his ear! Unmov'd he hears the groans of the dying; forgetting the bright, the immortal hopes Christianity affords, and that the thunder of the last judgment shall awake both him and them! So Judas, accompany'd by the eyes and wishes of the Pharisees, absorb'd in golden dreams, went in quest of Jesus.

Forth from the banks of the brook of Cedron came the Messiah, walking through the grove of palms that shades the valley. There beholding the city, and his assembled enemies, he cry'd, No more, O Jerusalem! do I lament thy children. See here are the sepulchres of the saints whom thou hast slain! yet many of thy sons will one day be mine, and join with you, my disciples, in bearing witness of me! I will now accomplish my almighty Father's will, and soon will all be unveil'd to you. Go Peter, and thou John, my faithful, my belov'd disciples, to the city, where you will see within the walls a man bearing a pitcher of water. With affectionate amazement, will he cast his eyes on you. Follow his steps, and where he enters, ask the good man of the house, saying, Where is the guest chamber, that the Master may eat with his disciples? He will courteously

conduct you to a large upper room: and there make ready.

The two disciples found every thing as Jesus had said. While the lamb was preparing, Peter, who eagerly expected his Lord, ascended to the flat roof of the house, to see if he could perceive him coming. But while his eye was rambling in search of his Lord, he beheld Mary, the mother of Jesus, accompany'd by a few friends. She appear'd fatigu'd, and in pain; for several days had she sought her son, and pass'd each tedious night in tears. Yet serene she walk'd, though unconscious of the dignity she deriv'd from her native purity and unsully'd virtue. She had an humble heart, which pride had never enter'd, and a noble soul worthy, if ever a fair mortal's was, of Eve, the first of women, when adorn'd with unblushing innocence. Thus she advanc'd amidst her friends. Close by her side was Lazarus, from his short death awak'd, fill'd with heavenly sensations, and secure of immortal life. His downcast eye appear'd fill'd with mysterious thoughts, blended with dignity inexpressible by mortal speech, and only felt by the happy dying Christian, who smiles at the hour of death. Lazarus was then rapt in meditation, on the separation of his soul, and its return to the body, when at the Messiah's call he arose from the dust. He was follow'd by his sister Mary, who devoutly listening to Christ, had been melted by his discourse, when choosing the better part, she sat weeping at his feet. Paleness and languor now overspread her countenance. In her eyes stood the quivering tear, which she strove to restrain. Nathaniel, whom Jesus had pronounc'd to be without guile, had gain'd her heart, and both he and her heavenly brother, who had been restor'd to life, divided the tender virgin's thoughts. Unmov'd she felt the approach of Death: yet already sympathiz'd in the grief that would be felt by Nathaniel, and her half immortal brother. Near her walk'd the modest Cidli, the daughter of Jairus. Scarce had twelve guiltless years pass'd over her head, when in the cheerful

gaiety of blooming life, she lay down in a peaceful field, and died in the presence of her mother. Then came the gracious Messiah, and calling her back to life, restor'd her to her afflicted, now transported parent. In heavenly sanctity, she bore the traces of her resurrection, and already appear'd half divine: but she was still a stranger to the glory that was to crown her future life, and had not yet obtain'd the full-blown beauty of ripen'd age: yet was her pious soul impress'd with a noble love. Thus mov'd the Shunamite, the fairest of the daughters of Israel, when rais'd by her mother under the apple-tree: there her mother brought her forth; there she brought her forth that bare her. Soft she call'd her sleeping daughter, with lisping voice. The fair one then arose, and follow'd her guiding steps into the myrtle grove, under the refreshing coolness of the inviting shades, where in clouds of spicy fragrance, the heavenly loves hover'd invisible; inspir'd by them, she there first inhal'd sublime sensations, and trembling wish'd to find the youth who, created for her, was inflam'd with the same sacred emotions. Thus walk'd Cidli, leaning on the arm of the devout Mary, the sister of Lazarus. She was accompany'd by Samida, whom the Saviour had rais'd from the dead by the walls of Nain. He was in the bloom of life; his hair hung in curls on his shoulders, and he appear'd as beautiful as David, when sitting by Bethlehem's limpid stream, he was ravish'd at hearing the Almighty's voice. But the smile of David sat not on the face of Samida.

Now Mary, the mother of Jesus, lifting up her eyes, discover'd Peter. Speedily she hasted to him to find the Messiah. Peter having return'd into the room of the feast, went with John to meet her. They beheld her coming, and stood amaz'd, so strongly was the elevation of her mind express'd in her face, and with such dignity was her form invested by him, who before his being Man, was Creator, and such again will he appear, when at his call the dust of the dead shall form new and immortal bodies, and again clothe the souls they before

invested. Her attendants, two of the most amiable daughters of Judea, and who most deserv'd her affection, walk'd on each side with sweet and humble modesty. As above all the mountains of Judea, Tabor, the resplendent witness of the bright transfiguration rises supereminent, so amidst these holy women Mary rose graceful. When among these favour'd disciples she saw not Jesus, she stood oppress'd with grief: but at length, recovering her speech, she turn'd to John, and smiling, while the big tear, with trembling lustre, glitter'd in her eye, thus address'd him:

He whom I have often borne in my arms—he who oft with looks of filial love has lain nearest my heart—I tremble at calling my son: for too exalted is he for a mortal mother—too great is his power—too great his miracles for one born and belov'd of me!—Where, O dearest John! ah! where is the Son of the Eternal? Long have I, with solicitous inquietude every where sought him—sought to prevent his coming to Jerusalem, the profane, the murderous city that seeks his life. They would put him to death, whom mine arms have borne; whom my breast has nourish'd; whom my tearful eyes have view'd with maternal tenderness!

The pious John with gentle voice reply'd: By the command of the Lord, we here prepare the feast of the passover. Soon will he return from Bethany. O Mary! wait his coming, and then reveal all that thine heart, with such maternal fondness, longs to express; and its great emotions so worthy of the holy Prophet.

All were now silent. The sister of Lazarus, who had oft enraptur'd listen'd to Jesus, gently lean'd on her beloved Cidli, and to Cidli Samida drew near, with downcast looks. She, no stranger to the pain that long had swell'd the heart of Samida, look'd aside at him; in his melancholy eyes she read the sensations of his soul, and beholding the dignity with which suffering virtue adorns the countenance, her heart melted, and she indulg'd these tender thoughts.

Generous youth! for me he passes his life in grief, his

days in sorrow! Oh that I were worthy of thee! and that thy Cidli deserv'd thy pure and heavenly love! Long have I wish'd to be thine, to learn from thee, why virtue is so lovely and so bless'd! Thee I love, as in ancient times the daughters of Jerusalem lov'd! I love thee as a young lamb, that at thy nod delights to play before thee! as the lily of the valley is brought forth and nourish'd by the early day, so in thy pure embrace would I be form'd for thine eternal love! Ah my mother, why hast thou renew'd to me the severe command of Heaven?—but I am silent—I obey the wisdom of an affectionate parent, and the voice of God speaking in her! to him am I devoted! I am rais'd from the dead! too little do I belong to the earth to be given to a mortal! Cease then, thou amiable youth, thine afflictions, thy tender sighs! Oh that I might again delighted behold that face dress'd in cheerful smiles, and wet with no tears but those of joy; pleas'd may I again behold thee, as when a youth, thou smil'dst at seeing me escape from my mother's fondling arms to run to thine.

Affected by these tender sentiments, her tears forc'd their way, which Samida perceiv'd, though Cidli abash'd, cover'd her face with her veil. He then softly stole dejected from the company, and when alone, looking on the ground, in plaintive accents, cry'd:

Why does she weep? No longer could I behold her tears! they break my heart! Ye precious drops, which silent stand trembling in her glittering eye, were but one of you shed for me—that one would be to me rest and consolation! I still incessantly grieve—grieve for her! My mind so full of soft solicitude—my gloomy mind so full of sorrow, is fill'd with thoughts of her! O thou immortal part of me! thou Soul that inhabits this tabernacle of clay!—or thou Reason, inform me of my fate, and disperse the clouds that hang over me. Tir'd am I of weeping—tir'd am I of being thus overclouded with perpetual gloom. Why, when I see her, who, perhaps, is no longer mortal—why, when she is absent, is she still the subject of my thoughts? Why does my full heart then

feel sensations before unknown? How tender are my ideas, all centring in love! Why flows from Cidli's lips the soft, the silver sound? Why does her speaking eye, from which her soul looks out, fill my throbbing heart with such strong, such dear emotions? each pure as innocence, and noble as the actions of the wise. Why does grief, with sable wing, hover over my head, when I imagine that she loves me not?—Torturing thought, be gone! Ah, then I am hasting to the grave, to which I was once so near!—Often do I then attempt, with powerful arms, to combat my sorrow. Every sentiment does my soul assemble that can evince its high birth and native dignity. Be thyself, I cry, thou heavenly form, thou immortal substance! and thus do I endeavour to inspire my mind with a noble firmness and magnanimity. Yet silent it remains, and looking on its tender wounds, weeps and trembles. Alas! why am I oblig'd to feel this everlasting flame, and yet meet no return? Oh, why does my heart become so miserable, by aspiring to an union with a heart so noble? Why do I still incessantly repeat her name? But can I ever cease to remember her?—Oh what voice divine is this, that in sacred whispers, and in harmonious strains, which none but tender souls can hear, tells me, that my love shall be eternal? I will then ever love thee!—be thou silent or reserved, thou shalt ever be the object of my love! Ah, Cidli, could I, with humble awe, presume to think that thou wert form'd for me, how tranquil would be my heart! Thy love, O Cidli! would fill my soul with joy! Oh, that I might be allow'd to indulge the pleasing thought, that thou, heavenly fair, wilt be forever mine!—mine through the endless duration of eternity! This I call, created for me. My love of thee has taught me to know the exalted charms of Virtue, once to me invisible! My heart with glad solicitude obeys her precepts. Thy voice, O Duty! I hear from afar—thy secret whispers silent lead me: their divine sound, when none was heard, has struck my ear, and not in vain! With child-like innocence, my obedient heart fulfils thine easy injunctions;

nor shall the possession of her who is dearer to me than the whole creation, be polluted by guilt. What a gift, O Cidli! wouldst thou be to me! how would I thank the Giver, and borne on thy purity, as on wings, approach nearer to the supremely Amiable, who has form'd thee thus lovely!—who has render'd my heart so tender, and thine so divine! As at thy birth, thy mother view'd thee with extatic smiles: as she hung over thy dying face, when thou in her embrace expired; then she heard not the tread of the approaching foot, nor the voice of the helpers in Juda: so oft as my soul, with each sensation, with each transport, trembled at the momentous thought, that thou, O Cidli! art created for me! My contemplative faculties have hung over thee expanded, view'd thy purity, the sublimity of thine ideas, the dignity of thy conceptions, till I became inebriated by raptures that seldom flow from Heaven into the heart of man! But when invaded by other thoughts, and lying in silent nocturnal gloom, my soul became dissolv'd in tender sorrow; then I appear'd abandon'd by all, and confin'd to a painful solitude! thou wert no longer with me, and the whole creation was to me a spacious void! Oh for the sake of all that is sacred—for the sake of that virtue and love, and inward beauty, which raises thy spotless soul above the dust of the earth; or if there be any thing still more precious and exalted—by thy awaking from death, and by thine immortality, when clothed in light, thou shalt dwell among the blest inhabitants of Heaven—by the crowns, the rewards of virtue, I conjure thee, my dear Cidli, communicate to me the thoughts, the sensations of thine heart! Is it possible that it should not know mine so full of love? mine that bleeds—

Oh the elevated, the sweet, the rapturous idea! she has been rais'd from the dead!—I too have been awak'd from death—perhaps to die no more! and both—to a higher life—But—silence, ye bold, ye ardent wishes!—these thoughts may carry me too far; and, perhaps, with too much ardour do I love—yet can I with too much

ardour love her—her with whom in that exalted life, I more desire to live, than here in the dust below! With her, whether on high, or upon earth, I ardent long to join in love to the Eternal! and to pour out our souls in grateful affection to his divine Son, our Lord, and our Redeemer!—But is he not now in danger of being put to death?—Yet can he die who has rais'd me from the dead?—How often has he already eluded the persecutor's rage!—but when dangers threaten his sacred life, ought I to indulge these thoughts of love?—O pardon me, thou divine Jesus! let all my private griefs be lost in my concern for thee! and thou, my soul, fix thine whole attention on the designs of these most harden'd —most ungrateful men, against thy Lord, thy Saviour. Samida now leaving Jerusalem, hasted to the silent, the lonely rock, in which had been lately hewn his sepulchre.

Meanwhile the mother of Jesus, with anxious look, address'd herself to John. He does not come, I will go and meet him—I will go and meet the Messiah, my son, said she.—I will find him, if his cruel enemies have not dipp'd their hands in his blood, and number'd him among the holy prophets who sleep in death! If he yet lives—if I be worthy to behold the lovely form, the attractive graces of my prophetic son, and his countenance beaming love divine, will once more condescend to smile on his enraptur'd mother, I will lose my anguish at his feet, where he graciously suffer'd Mary Magdalene, who is not his mother, to weep. With awful reverence will I also prostrate myself before him—I will grasp his knees —I too will wet his feet with my tears! Then looking up to his face benign, I'll say, By those tears, the first fruits of thy compassion, that stream'd from thine eyes at thy birth! by that extatic, that transporting rapture that was diffus'd through my whole soul, when the immortals struck my ears with heavenly harmony, and in divine hymns sung thy nativity! If ever I was dear to thee—if thou still remember'st the filial affection with which thou returnedst thy mother's joy, when, after so-

licitous search, I found thee in sacred dignity among the priests, who, by thy words, were with mute amazement fill'd: Then, O my Son! I flew to thee with open arms. —I saw neither temple nor priest—Thou wast all to me —I press'd thee to my heart, and lifting up my eyes, ador'd the great Jehovah! Oh by that extatic joy, the foretaste of eternal felicity; by thy humanity and gentle condescension to all, have compassion on me; disappoint the designs of thine enemies, and do not die. Thus she spake, and then hasted to meet her Son. So the devout ejaculations of the enraptur'd mind ascend to him by whom they are inspir'd.

The great Messiah beheld his mother advancing towards him; not with the eye of sense; but with that intuitive perception by which he penetrates the thoughts of the enraptur'd seraph. Ah! I will, after my resurrection, said he, have pity on thee, with a pity beyond that of a mother for her only son! and then turn'd aside.

Now advanc'd the grey evening. Silence reign'd all around, and he slowly went to the hill of Golgotha, near which was a solitary sepulchre hewn in the rock, wherein no mouldering corpse had yet return'd to its original dust. This had been form'd by the devout Joseph of Arimathea, that on the last day, when Death shall end his reign, he might there rise from the earth. He knew not for whom he had order'd it to be hewn: or that there was to be laid the body of the great Messiah! Jesus stood by the sepulchre, and casting up to the hill of Golgotha a look of sacred grief, thus to himself said:

Now declines the day. Now comes the prayerful night resting on Gethsemane. Soon will the day again enlighten that hill, and the dawning morn arise on Golgotha. Then thou, who containest the bones of the meanest sinners, shalt become an altar! On thee the victim is willing to be slain! soon will it bleed! Welcome death for the human race! Then will my gracious Father look down on me from his exalted throne, where once

I sat in his embrace! Me will the angels of God behold, and those for whom I die! Welcome death for the heirs of eternal life!—There in the bosom of the Father have I sat, the Creator of man, and the Friend of the created! I am now, O man! become thy Brother! and though once array'd in celestial splendor, yet wounded will I die, bleeding on thy hill, O Golgotha!—Then—(Here he turn'd, and look'd into the sepulchre)—then will this body pass a day, and two nights within the silent mansion of that cool tomb, in a softer sleep than that of Adam, when the great mystery of death was first unfolded, and he, one melancholy evening, heard the decree, Thou must lie down and die. Many centuries has he slept, and over him has the feet of his descendants walk'd, while he hears not the sound. They too are dead, and on their bones the feet of their offspring have, careless, trod! But amidst the joys of a blissful eternity, can any felicity be compar'd to mine? the righteous shall all transported awake—in peace, in rejoicing and triumph, awake! When my body has slept in this narrow mansion, and I have rais'd to endless life the bones of the dead, then every care, every doubt will cease—every tear be forever wip'd away! Death will be the introduction to triumphant joy and sweet sensations. Nor the grim tyrant, nor the threatening tomb, shall appear on the new earth. The reflection fills me with a rapture that benumbs all human sensation. The bless'd in lucid white shall walk serene. Many shall bear wounds like those of the Son of Man—resplendent wounds! They shall hymn the Victor, and call him by the tender names of Son and Brother. What earthly mortal, what inhabitant of Heaven, can count their number? their name is Myriads; and all mine! Old things shall then be done away, and behold all things shall become new. But first Golgotha must see me die, and that sepulchre inclose this mortal frame.

The Messiah then quicken'd his pace. Judas lurking in the dim twilight, found him near the wall of Jerusalem, and silent mingled among the saints, forming on

his deceitful countenance the look of innocence, while his heart felt the sting of guilt. Ithuriel, who had gone before him, had heard from the top of an olive the approaching step of the Messiah, and descending as Jesus pass'd by, walk'd with him invisible, and in accents soft as the last thoughts of the dying Christian, thus spake:

Thou, O Saviour! knowest that thou art betray'd by Judas—by him who has been instructed by thine example—by him who has seen thy miracles—by him to whom thy lips have unfolded the mysteries of eternal life, and whom thou hast condescended to call thy disciple. Still the harmonious voice of the sublime Eloa charms my ear: still are open his lips, calling me to haste down to earth, to be the tutelar spirit of Judas! but, ah, I leave the sinner! no longer can I be his guardian! against him shall I witness on the great day of retribution!—against him shall I speak with the voice of thunder! Between the resplendent seats of those that are worthy to sit with thee, judging the world, will I come forth, cloth'd in darkness, and extending my hand towards the cloud that will envelop thy throne, will I say, O thou whose blood trickled down from the cross! O thou who hast bled and dy'd by the hands of those thou lovedst! Judas Iscariot has drank iniquity, and against this dreadful day has steep'd his soul in blackest guilt. He has call'd down destruction on his head, and deserv'd the fate of the reprobate. Let him be driven from the presence of the Lord. Let him walk in the path of eternal perdition. His guilt be upon himself: I am innocent of the blood of the sinner.

Here the immortal paus'd, but looking at the Mediator, and reading in his eye that he might farther disclose his concern, he thus continu'd:

Alas! what different thoughts did I once entertain of the disciple of the gracious Friend of Man! Thou, Judas, said I, shall, by glorious wounds, bear witness of thy Lord, and when thou dyest a martyr for the truth, thou shalt hear the sublime songs we shall sing before the Victors. Oh didst thou but thus die, thy soul would be

array'd in light, and thy friend would then, rejoicing, conduct thee in triumph to the Messiah, the first of Conquerors. Among the golden seats, plac'd for the twelve elected by the Messiah, I should have pointed out that rais'd for thee. At the sight of the radiant seat, and of him who sits on the throne, thy soul would overflow with transport! I should have styl'd thee my friend, my brother! with softest voice I should have call'd thee my fellow seraph! Then would my Judas explain to me the mysteries of Christianity: his sensations when the Spirit which inspir'd the holy prophets, descended upon him from Heaven—when thou, O Judas! receiv'dst the fortitude to despise death—when taught by the Holy Spirit, thy heart pray'd in words unutterable, and tasted of the innocence of Paradise.—But these thoughts are fled. As the smiling Spring drops her flowers, as the bloom of life fades, ere it is ripen'd by time, so all is pass'd away. Forsaken am I by the disciple! Lately was I the guardian angel of a saint: but now solitary I walk among the angels, who look upon me with silent sympathy. Speak the word, O divine Messiah! shall I return to the celestial regions? or am I worthy to behold thy death?

Jesus, with a compos'd look, answer'd the seraph, Simon Peter will also be tempted by the malicious destroyer, I therefore appoint thee his angel. Two have been given to John; Peter must have the same number. He shall hereafter hear the celestial hymns, sung by those who shall join the triumphant host above, and in his death will he resemble me.

On hearing this, the seraph, with fervid joy, flew to embrace Orion, his fellow guardian. Jesus now hasted to celebrate the last convivial feast with his disciples, and passing by the splendid palaces of luxurious sinners, enter'd the more peaceful dwelling of an obscure upright man. The disciples silently reclin'd around the table on which was plac'd the lamb of the covenant. Next to the Messiah was John, on whose face sat an affectionate smile. With sweet serenity Jesus then

look'd round on his disciples: his eye dispens'd peace, soft repose, and a pleasing melancholy, full of deep contemplation, and calm heart-felt felicity. So Joseph appear'd among his brethren, after feeling the first raptures, when his tears, his speaking tears, ceas'd to flow; when he no longer hung on his brother Benjamin, and he knew that his aged father was still alive.

Mention now, my Muse, the farewel of the Lover to his Belov'd, and all the speech of mourning friendship. As when the disciple, who with the exalted James was styl'd a Son of Thunder, saw in solitary Patmos revelations pour'd forth, and from the heart of the Messiah, the soul of sentiment spoke, while from the Saviour's eye, he enraptur'd look'd up to Heaven; so may my strains, with sacred simplicity, pathetic flow.

Jesus now, with a mournful look, cry'd, Greatly have I desir'd to eat this repast with you, my disciples, before I suffer—soon will be accomplish'd the predictions of those who spake of me. Ye know the prophet that was worthy to see the divine appearance, who heard the voice of the seraphs over a throne in the temple, while the Heavens resounded with their festal Hallelujahs, and their crying to each other, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts! the whole earth is full of his glory! then the posts of the doors mov'd at the voice of him that cry'd; the temple was fill'd with smoke; the sanctuary with clouds of votive incense. Then was I present with my Father: with him was I in the temple: for before Abraham was, I am—before this sacred land with the mountain of God arose from the waters—before the world itself was form'd, I was.—But these thoughts, in all their amplitude, ye cannot yet comprehend. This divine prophet, who saw the glory of the Most High, at length cry'd, Lo, I behold in futurity, a branch springing out of the stem of Jesse, that shall grow up before the Lord as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground. His form is chang'd—his beauty wither'd. Every solace of life is fled, and all the smiles of the blooming year. He

is despis'd and rejected of man: a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Men are silent at the affliction of his soul. They turn away their faces from him. Yet hath he borne our griefs, and carry'd our sorrows. For our transgressions is he wounded, and with his stripes are we heal'd. Like the wandering sheep have we gone astray: we have turn'd every one to our own way: the Lord hath therefore laid on him the iniquity of us all. Oppress'd and afflicted, he opens not his mouth: meek, like the lamb, is he led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers, is dumb. From prison and from judgment is he taken, and who shall declare the generation of the redeem'd, who are numerous as the host of Heaven. He hath given his life an offering for sin, he shall therefore see his seed, a race of new immortals, who having dy'd to sin, have awak'd to righteousness, and with him shall enjoy eternal life.

Thus spake the Redeemer, and then continu'd long silent, with his eyes lift up to Heaven. At length he resum'd, This, O my disciples! is the last time in which I shall keep this feast with you. For never more shall I taste the fruit of the cheerful vine, till I drink it new in my Father's kingdom. In the realms of Joy are many mansions—these I go to prepare for you. There I shall see you again, and with the assembled fathers, commence new festivals, spiritual repasts, of perpetual duration.

Jesus ceas'd, and still all were silent. Thus silent were the holy people on Mount Moriah, when Solomon, the wisest of the sons of Abraham, at the prayer of consecration, lay'd his crown at the altar, before the Eternal. Then was the temple fill'd with a cloud. The priests, beholding the glory of the Lord, were unable to continue their sacrifices, and the jubilant Hallelujahs ceas'd. Not a word was then heard, till one of the supplicants, transported with sacred awe, lift up his face to the cloud, and with tremulous voice, and arms stretch'd forth towards Heaven, cry'd, Holy, holy, holy! Thus silent were

the disciples, till Lebbeus, turning to Judas, with soft voice, said:

Alas! 'tis now too certain, that whatever the other disciples may say or think of his frequent discourses on death, that the Son of Man is about to die. Come Death, relief from misery, the repose of the weary traveller, take pity on me! for when Jesus, my Lord, is led to death, like a lamb to the slaughter, thou wilt be my sole consolation!—His sighs now stopp'd his voice. The Messiah observ'd him and Judas, and giving him a look of mingled benevolence and grief, said to his disciples, How shall I tell you, my friends, that one of you will betray me!

Seiz'd with sudden grief and astonishment, all cry'd, Lord, is it I? The Messiah answer'd, It is one of you who now keep the paschal feast with me. Here his countenance assum'd the severity of the judge, and he added, The Son of Man goeth, as the prophets have written of him; but woe to him by whom he is betray'd: good were it for that man that he had never been born. Judas then, with low voice, repeating, Is it I? Jesus whispering answer'd, Thou knowest that it is thyself.

Now thoughts of grace and eternal salvation again brighten the Mediator's countenance. He rises to institute the sacred Eucharist, uttering the solemn words which so many boldly profane, by absurd superstition, by ignorance, and by more hateful vice. But in vain do they wear the fair garb of Christianity, or the well-painted mask; for while, with polluted hearts, they chant the praises of the spotless Redeemer, they call down on themselves the sentence of eternal death. He knows them not. He who godlike liv'd, and fill'd with benevolence, dy'd on the cross, is not the Saviour of the cruel, the impious, the lewd, the dissolute: while steep'd in impenitence, and wallowing in vice, meek-ey'd Mercy, ever gracious, ever pure, stretches not out her hand to them. All now receiv'd from him the bread, emblem of his broken body, and the sacred cup, typical of his

streaming blood—with humility and awful silence they receiv'd them from his hand. When John, seiz'd with a sudden transport, sunk down to his feet, kiss'd them, and wetted them with his tears.

Jesus then looking up towards Heaven, with a gracious smile, cry'd, O Father! permit him to see my glory. John then arising beheld at the end of the chamber a bright assembly of angels, who knew that he saw them. Rapt in an ecstatic transport, he beheld the sublime Gabriel, with motionless astonishment: enraptur'd he saw the brightness of the celestial Raphael, and him he honour'd: with delight unutterable, he also perceiv'd Salem in an human form, who, with a smile of friendship, open'd his arms, and him he lov'd. Now, turning his ravish'd eyes, he discover'd in the Messiah's placid countenance, traces of his celestial glory, and sunk speechless on his bosom. Gabriel then rose on his extended wings, and, transported with love, said to Jesus, O thou, great Messiah, embrace me, as thou embracest thy disciple! To him the Messiah answer'd, Thou, O Gabriel! shalt attend on me, when I sit on my throne, and shalt be seated with Eloa, in the presence of the Most High. Gabriel bow'd adoring.

At last came Judas, and with the familiarity, and dissembled love of John, threw himself at the feet of Jesus. Judas, arise, said the Messiah, and gave him the cup, the memorial of his death. Judas receiv'd it unmov'd. Then the Saviour, viewing him, was troubled in spirit, and, with a loud voice, cry'd, I know those whom I have chosen: yet one of you will betray me. This I now tell you, that ye may believe when it is accomplish'd, and that ye may know the rewards prepar'd for him that continues faithful unto the end. He that receiveth my word shall be sav'd. Whosoever receiveth you, receiveth me; and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. But the traitor will not obtain the crown of life. I repeat it again, one of you will betray the Son of Man!

Sorrow was again spread over each countenance. Peter then made a sign to John, who still lay reclin'd on the breast of the Redeemer, and, whispering, ask'd, Who is it? He it is, said the Saviour, with low voice, to whom I, with tender affection, and brotherly love, give this sop. He then gave it to Judas. John trembled; but his humanity kept him silent.

Judas now abruptly left the room. Night was come, and he was surrounded with all its terrors. Wildly he cast his eyes into the dark obscure, and thus spake to himself: He then certainly knows it! Now will the smooth, the fawning John, with his incessant smiles, reveal it to them all—All will know what the heart of Jesus has intrusted to him—They will all know what I have done—Be it so—These new kings must fly before they have obtain'd their kingdoms. John may perhaps soon learn to lay aside his insidious smiles, and Peter, when in bonds, will be less bold!—With what imperious accent did Jesus speak! With what a stern air, and commanding voice did he cry, Judas, arise! How different the language he uses to his favourite John!—Kings indeed are not to be commanded! I will however see them again, before they obtain their kingdoms—in bonds will I see them!—but their friend will die!—Is it possible? who will believe that he can die, who has rais'd others from the dead?—He die!—What wilt thou relent? O my suffering heart! banish all humanity! If he dies he must surely be a visionary, and not the Sent of God—Our priests are men of wisdom—they are consecrated by Jehovah, the King of Kings—yet they always hated him!—The law of Moses is the rule of their conduct! I am their confident.—He surely will not die—yet shall I see him bound—He will then, perhaps, forget the exalted merit of his belov'd disciples, and, being humbled, will condescend to look upon the slighted Judas!—but I must haste—for me wait the Lords of Jerusalem.

He then proceeded to the high-priest's palace. The assembly of the disciples was now holy, and unpolluted by guilt. Thus when the Christian youth return'd from

the interment of Ananias and Saphira, with fairer beauty shone the congregation in the eye of the Lord; for their sacred unanimity was disturb'd by no selfish, no sordid disposition. In the meanwhile Jesus, conscious of his dignity, with divine majesty and composure, thus address'd the disciples:

Now is the Son of Man glorify'd: now is the infinite, the boundless mercy of the Most High glorify'd in him. Though at present his splendor is veil'd by the body of flesh, soon shall even this human frame be invested with celestial beauty.—But your grief interrupts my speech.—Why, my children, do you weep?—'tis true I shall soon leave you: ye shall seek me, but shall not find me: for ye know not whither I go; and whither I go, ye cannot come.—But cease your tears. Ye shall see me again. My dear children, I give you a new commandment—a commandment more noble, more exalted than all the traditional observances of the scribes and elders: Love each other, as I have lov'd you: for by your tender, your mutual, your disinterested affection, shall all men know that ye are my disciples.

Simon Peter then arose, and said, Whither, Lord, dost thou go? Whither I go, said the Redeemer, thou canst not now follow me; but thou shalt at length follow my steps, and walk in the path I tread. Why, O my Lord, said Peter, with an eager and amiable warmth; why cannot I follow thee now? To preserve thy life will I lay down my own! Thou, Simon, lay down thy life! return'd Jesus; alas! how little dost thou know thyself! I repeat it again, that ere the early cock proclaims the opening dawn, thou wilt deny me thrice!

The Redeemer then asking if they were all present, the disciples, oppress'd with melancholy, answer'd, We are here. Christ then return'd, The voice of one I no longer distinguish. To this Lebbeus reply'd, trembling, Judas Iscariot is wanting. Jesus was standing; but he now kneel'd, and the apostles plac'd themselves on their knees around him. The bless'd Saviour then lifting up his eyes, pray'd with a loud voice: O Father! the hour

is come, glorify thine only begotten Son, that thy Son may also glorify thee. To his power hast thou committed all mortals, that he may at length raise them from the dead, and bestow on them everlasting felicity. This, O my God! is eternal life, to know thee, and Christ whom thou hast sent, as the Prince of Peace and the King of Glory. Already, O Father! do I behold in spirit the accomplishment of the important work. Thee have I glorify'd here on earth, and the work thou gavest me to do, I have finish'd. Now crowns and regal honours await me at thy right hand! give me the glory I enjoy'd with thee, ere I, by thy power, created the earth and its inhabitants. Thy tremendous—thy gracious name have I declar'd to those thou gavest me out of this guilty world: thine they were: thou gavest them me; and to the wisdom which I taught them, they have faithfully adher'd. Now do they know that what thou teachest me, I have taught to them. This knowledge they with duty and with reverence have receiv'd; deep in their hearts have they lodg'd this divine truth, that thou hast sent me. For them, O Father! do I pray—for them I now pray, and not for the world. All who are mine are thine; those that are thine are mine, and the subject of my joy and my glory. Now do I quit this earthly globe, to return to thy celestial throne—to thee O Father! But they remain on earth—they will remain the scorn of sinners, and expos'd to misery! Keep then, O holy Father! those whom thou hast given me, that they as brethren may live in amity, and like us unite in the great work of love and grace divine. While cloth'd in this terrestrial frame, I have taken care of them, and watch'd over their immortal souls. Here they are, O my Father, none have I lost, but the son of Perdition! he, ungrateful, has deserted me, and is become a witness to the truth of the prophets. Now come I to thee. Thus I speak while I am still with them, that they may think on my glory, and rejoice in my joy. The words of thy love have they heard, and sinners have hated them, as they hated me. Yet I pray not that thou

wouldst take them from the earth; but only that thou wouldst shield them from their persecutors;—from the spirits of destruction; for they like me walk in innocence. Sanctify them, O God! through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me, I send them: for them I lay down my life, that they may be pure and holy, and ready to suffer for the cause of truth and virtue. Yet, O my Father! I pray not for my disciples alone; but for those they shall convert—for those my children, who will one day, like the dew of the morning, be born to me through thy word. May they all be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, so may they be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The glory I receive from thee, I give to them, that they may be one, even as we are one, and all fulfil thy gracious intentions; that the sinners of the earth, fill'd with admiration, may perceive that I was sent from Heaven. Love them, O my God! whom thou hast given me, as the first fruits of thy Son's love to man; may these be where I am, and behold that glory, which thou, gracious Father, gavest me, before the Heavens were stretch'd around this earthly ball. The world know thee not; but I have known thee. To these, my friends, have I disclos'd the important purposes for which I was sent, and will farther disclose them, that thy love to me may penetrate their hearts, and their immortal souls be fill'd with love to thee, and their Redeemer.

Now Jesus arose, and went forth with his disciples. At length, drawing near to the brook of Cedron, and hearing the nightly breeze play in the branches of some olives that stood on an eminence, he said to Gabriel, In the depth of the Garden, on the sloping side of the mountain, is a solitary spot, shaded by a grove of palms; there assemble the angels. Thus the Saviour spake, and was now drawing near to the accomplishment of such exalted deeds, as since the creation of the earth and the heavens, or since the birth of the angels, had never been known: such as were never seen in the boundless

theatre of infinite space. But no outward acclamations, no vain testimonies of applause, the pleasing and fit attendants on the exploits of vulgar heroes, surrounded the great Messiah, while he went forth to conquer Sin and Death.

THE

MESSIAH.

BOOK V.

The Argument.

God descends towards the earth, and is met by the wise men of the east, newly releas'd from their bodies, one of whom addresses the Most High. He is seen by the first inhabitant of a guiltless world, who relates to his happy offspring, what he has heard of the fall of man, and the coming of the Messiah. God rests on Tabor. Jesus prays, when Adramelech coming to insult him, is by a look put to flight. The Messiah comes to his disciples, whom he finds asleep. He then returns to pray. Abbadona comes, and after mistaking John for the Messiah, finds him, and gives vent to his thoughts. The Messiah again returns to his sleeping disciples, and a third time prostrates himself in prayer, when God sends Eloa to comfort him by singing a triumphant song on his future glory. All the angels, except Eloa and Gabriel, withdraw, and God himself returns to his celestial throne.

THE

MESSIAH.

BOOK V.

ARRAY'D in awful dignity, Jehovah sat on his exalted throne, and near him stood Eloa, who, with humble reverence, and low prostration, said, May I presume, O Eternal! to ask, Why sits terror on thy brow? Why does anger sparkle in thine eyes? What means this thunder, which rolls tremendous? Thou lookest on the stars, and they hide their heads. Why—oh, why do I no longer hear the harmony of the spheres? wherever thine eyes are turn'd, the spheres are silent—silent are the cherubim and seraphim—Of all the numberless myriads of angelic spirits, none do I hear chanting thy praise—none in lofty strains hymning the great Messiah: but all, with reverential awe, veil their faces before thee. Wilt thou, O God! arise, and call to judgment one of thy worlds? or hast thou determin'd to destroy the kingdom of Satan, and to chastise the blasphemer? Wilt thou, O Most Righteous! go forth to annihilate the sinner! and to reduce to nothing the deep abyss of Hell his dominion? Shall the name of him whom thou hast created no longer remain in the book of the living? Shall he be utterly cut off from the number of the eternal spirits? Then shall I see him lying prostrate, O thou adorable Source of Justice!—lying prostrate before thee, vanquish'd by thine anger, while the howlings of his despair shall pervade the regions of eternal night, and reach even the gates of Heaven. Then shall the stars in their courses proclaim, There lies the arch-

apostate, reduc'd to destruction. If this be thy will, O thou Sovereign Judge! arm me with thy power, and permit me to march out against the blasphemer. Let me be encompass'd with impenetrable gloom, give me a thousand thunders, and clothe me in thy divine strength, that before thy face, I may crush at the very gate of death, the menacing chief of thine accursed foes. O Jehovah, how dreadful art thou in judgment! long had I existed when the earth was form'd; for my days are not the days of a mortal, who shoots up, spreads his leaves and flourishes, then withers, sinks, and dies: yet never have I seen thee thus array'd in terror! O thou Omnipotent! forgive my having taken upon me to speak to thee. I am but a vapour. Be not offended against me, O my Maker! view me not with that piercing look which thou now castest on the earth, lest thy finite seraph die. Then will my name no longer remain in the book of the eternals, nor shall I be remember'd in the sanctuary of my God.

Eloa, said the Most High, I will descend to the Messiah, who is about to fall a sacrifice to the cruelty of the people I have chosen. They have slighted his miracles; they have despis'd his instructions; they have disregarded my offer'd terms of mercy and salvation. Now he suffers, the just for the unjust. He, guiltless, suffers for sinners: he, ever merciful, will bleed for his very murderers, and even lay down his life, not for his friends; but for his cruel, his merciless enemies.

Thus spake the Almighty, and arose from his eternal throne. Loud thunder now resounded through the high arch of Heaven. The holy mountains shook, and with them the altar of the divine Mediator. The clouds of sacred darkness which encompass'd the sanctuary, three times flew back, and at the fourth, the lofty seat of judgment was seen to tremble. The Most High walk'd through the solar way that leads down to earth. At the end of the bright path illumin'd by suns, he was met by a seraph, who was conducting six righteous souls, who had lately left their bodies. These their immortal com-

ductor now array'd in glory, adorning their new etherial forms with resplendent beams. They were the six wise men of the happy east, who, guided by a swift moving star, first brought their gifts, and paid their adorations to Jesus—to Jesus, the heavenly babe, encompass'd by ministering angels.

Hadad, for so the first was call'd, left his beloved consort, the fairest of the daughters of Bethurim. At his decease she burst into no lamentations. This in a sacred hour of love she had vow'd to Hadad: certain of his and her immortality, she suppress'd her tears—she forgot to weep: Yet their mutual love exceeded that of mortals.

Selima, during a life of piety, and fervent devotion, had borne his misfortunes with resignation. He died, and enter'd on everlasting happiness.

Zimri taught the people: but they treated him with contempt, and persisted in their vices. Yet when dying, he prevail'd on one of them to lead a divine life, and then expir'd.

Mirja brought up five sons, whom, by his example and instructions, he inspir'd with the love of Virtue. They enjoy'd her pure, her intellectual treasures: this was their riches: they neither had, nor needed other wealth: but looking forward to a more blissful state, they, with resignation, beheld their pious father die.

Beled's eyes smiling in death, were clos'd by his once mortal enemy, who wept over him. Beled had reveng'd himself by his magnanimity; for he had generously given him half his kingdom. On which the hatred of enmity gave way to the soft sensations of friendship. He who had endeavour'd to dethrone Beled, now became charm'd with his virtues, and liv'd like him.

Sunith us'd to sing in Parphar's grove to the youth of Bethlehem, and with him were his three holy daughters. Thee have the cedars—thee has Jedidoth's flowing stream bewail'd to its lonely banks! Ah thee, have thy veil'd daughters, O Sunith! lamented to their harps, with virgin tears!

The seraph having adorn'd these souls with radiant lustre, their piercing eye penetrated the wide expanse, and they saw a distant approaching glance of the divine glory. Their senses now refin'd, and fitted for everlasting joys, became more strong, more exquisite. They rais'd themselves. The glory of the Lord pass'd over them, and the seraph, with humble adoration, cry'd aloud, Behold the great Jehovah!—

Selima now fill'd with rapture, essay'd to speak, when his new voice, flowing in soft melody and silver sounds, fill'd him with pleasing surprise. O thou whom I behold, said he; by what name, thou Source of Being, of Light, of Joy!—by what worthy name shall I, transported, call thee?—thee whom my eyes now first behold! God! Jehovah! Father! Or wouldst thou rather be nam'd the Inexpressible? Or the Father of thy holy Son Jesus, who, at Bethlehem, assum'd the human form: whom we, with troops of rejoicing angels saw? Hail eternal Father of the everlasting Son, to thee be rais'd incessant Hallelujahs. In thee exults the immortal soul, born of thine inspiring breath, and the heiress of eternal life. Thou most Bless'd! most Incomprehensible! among men have I heard thee nam'd Love; yet how dreadful, how terrible dost thou now appear! Oh comest thou forth to slay thine enemies? Shall the abode of sinners be utterly destroy'd? Wilt thou exterminate those that yet disown thy Son? No, thou art merciful and gracious! Thou wilt not be rigorous in judgment! For them—even for them, the unthankful and the evil, hast thou sent the great Messiah! Hail thou eternal Father of the everlasting Son! Then Selima, with the other souls, worshipp'd in humble prostration.

At the other end of the luminous path, Eloa, with agile motion, leapt into his resplendent chariot, in which he had carry'd Elijah up to Heaven, when, O Dothan, on thy cloud-envelopp'd mountains, he was seen by Elisha. Eloa stood erect. He rush'd forward like an impetuous storm. Then resounded the golden axis. Then backward flew his hair and vesture, like shining clouds.

With firm foot the immortal stood immoveable. In his right hand he carry'd on high a storm; at each elevated thought thunders burst from the tempest. Thus he followed the mighty Jehovah through luminous paths, enlighten'd by suns. The Almighty now pass'd through the vast assemblage of stars, call'd the Milky Way: but among the immortals it is nam'd the Resting Place of the Omnipotent: for when the first celestial sabbath saw the world completed, there the Eternal stopp'd to view his works.

The Almighty now approach'd a star, the dwelling of rational beings, men form'd like us, but free from vice, and exempt from death. Their first progenitor stood among his guiltless offspring in all the bloom, in all the vigour of manly youth, tho' a long series of ages had pass'd over his head. His eyes, which time had not dimm'd, beheld with pleasure his happy descendants; nor were they incapable of shedding the pleasing tear of joy. His quick ear was not clos'd to the voice of the Most High; to the instructions of the seraph; nor to the language of his numerous offspring, from whom he with pleasure heard the endearing appellation of father. At his right side stood the mother of men, her children, beautiful as when the Creator first led her, immortal fair! to the embraces of her spouse; even age had added to her charms, and she now appear'd more lovely than her blooming daughters. At his left hand was his first-born, his worthy son, the image of his father, array'd in heavenly innocence. Around them stood their descendants of different generations; and scatter'd about them, on the smiling turf, reclin'd their youngest offspring, whose waving locks falling in curls, were crow'd with flowers, beautiful as those that, on this earth, once enamell'd the plains of Paradise. With pleasure they gaz'd on their primeval parents, while their young hearts panted to imitate their virtues. The fathers and mothers had brought the lovely infants born the preceding year, to receive the first dear embrace, and pious benediction of their original ancestors. When the

happy father of this blessed race of immortal beings, lifting up his eyes towards Heaven, to invoke the divine benediction, beheld the face of God. The smile of benignity and paternal love now gave place to a look of solemn and reverential awe, mingled with gratitude; then bowing in humble worship, he cry'd:

Behold, O my children, the Great Eternal! from whom both you and I receiv'd our life. 'Tis he who has cloth'd those vales with beauteous flowers; those blooming groves with fragrant blossoms and blushing fruit, together hanging on each bending bough; and has crown'd the summit of these mountains with golden clouds; yet neither to the flowery vale, the blooming grove, or to the aspiring mountain, has he given immortal souls. These were his gifts to you, my children! Neither to hill, nor grove, nor vale, has he given your lovely features, nor the human form, so convenient, so august: nor the face significant, expressive of the soul's deepest thoughts: no look of rapturous joy sublime, with grateful eye rais'd up to Heaven: no voice to transmit the great sensations of the glowing heart to fellow minds; or to join the lofty strains of the adoring angels! To me he appear'd in the waving groves of Paradise, then a small, but delightful garden, tho' it has now spread over this spacious country. There, with benignant grace, he first appear'd to me, when from earth he had form'd me man, and blessing me, led your mother to my embraces. Speak, ye cedars, rustling speak!—speak, for under your branches I saw him walk! Stay, thou rapid stream! stay, for there I saw him pass thy waves! Thou, the soft breath of gentle gales, whisper, as when, with smiling grace, he descended from these towering hills. Stand still before him, O earth, and suspend thy course! as once thou stoodst still, when he pass'd over thee; when round his face sublime the moving heavens flow'd! when his right hand pois'd the glowing suns, and in his left he held the revolving planets!

May I presume, O Eternal! again enraptur'd to look on thee? O Father! disperse the tremendous gloom with

which thou art encompass'd. Remove from thine eyes that awful displeasure, which sure none but an immortal can behold and live! By whom, O my God! art thou offended?—can it be by those thou lovest?—Perhaps 'tis by the miserable race of spirits who fell, and ventur'd (a thought I can scarce conceive!) to provoke the All-gracious, the Omnipotent.—

Hear me, O my children, and attend to my words.—Long have I been silent, lest I should give inquietude to your tender, your happy minds, and melancholy should disturb your sacred rest. Far from us, on one of the worlds enlighten'd by another sun, are men whose form resembles ours: but having forfeited their native innocence, are no longer immortal. You justly wonder, and well you may, that he who was created for an eternal duration, and was one of the most admirable of the works of the great Omnipotent, should basely forfeit his immortality. But it is not the everlasting spirit—the never-dying soul that is become mortal: it is the body, which returns to the earth, of which it was made. This they call dying. The immortal soul having lost its beauty, its innocence, is conducted to the righteous judgment seat of God, there to receive a sentence according to the works done in the body.—Ye awful, ye dreadful thoughts fly far from me! I stand aghast at the dread idea! On that tremendous tribunal, God alone, the Creator and Judge, can think. With what overwhelming terror does the mere idea of death fill an immortal! It is preceded by something dreadful, which those unhappy creatures call pain. The dying can scarce with trembling tongue, utter a mournful farewell!—With difficulty he respires!—A cold sweat rises on his alter'd face!—Faint and slow beats his heart!—His eye-strings break!—His eyes become fix'd, and no longer see!—From them the face of the earth and heavens are vanish'd, and lost in the abyss of night!—He no longer hears the voice of man, nor the tender expressions of love and friendship!—He himself cannot speak! His heart has ceas'd to beat! he is dead! The form once the most lovely becomes loath-

some!—It is bury'd in the earth, and conceal'd from human sight! Thus the daughter expires in the arms of her fond mother, who wishes to accompany her in death. The father presses to his heart his only son, who expires in blooming youth. Lamenting children see their parents die, the comfort, the stay of their years. On the breast of the enamour'd bridegroom, immers'd in misery, reclines his beloved bride, and breathes her last. What now remains of heavenly love, and of the soft and noble sentiments it inspires, is but a faint shadow of the pure love, felt by their progenitors the first, the happy pair, while, like us, in the state of innocence. In a little time—ah! in a very little time, they die. God shews them no pity, he relents not at the parting sigh of the pious spouse, at the fervour of her supplications, and her earnest entreaties for one hour more: nor at the despair of the trembling youth embracing her in speechless sorrow: nor at the afflicted virtue, to which love, and its tender sensibilities, sometimes raise the mortal pair.

Here he ceas'd, interrupted by the lamentations of his affrighted children. Fathers press'd their sons, and mothers, their terrify'd daughters, to their trembling breasts. Boys grasp'd the knees of the stooping fathers, and kiss'd from the parent's eye the manly tear. Hand in hand sat brothers and sisters, with their timorous looks fix'd on each other; and on the bosoms of the beloved fair sunk, trembling, the immortal youth; who felt life beat with a higher pulse, while reclin'd on the bosoms of the celestial maids. But now the father of that spotless race, recalling his fortitude, thus resum'd, while his fair consort fondly lean'd on his shoulder.

Oh may it not be these whom God, in his wrath, is now visiting! Alas! they have, perhaps, too much offended their gracious Creator; and having fill'd up the measure of their iniquities, he is going to exterminate them. Ah! ye kindred race, originally design'd, like us, for immortality, had you but known our affectionate love; —had you but foreseen our sorrow for you; never,

surely, would you, by your crimes, have drawn down the vengeance of your and our Almighty Friend! O kindred race! should the earth be your grave, and God at once destroy all its rational inhabitants; we will pity those whom God has slain—but we shall despise ye too —our pity will be mingled with contempt:—How could ye, ungrateful, offend such unbounded goodness?—Yet to this race, O Almighty Father! thou hast sent thy beloved Son, the glorious Messiah! All the seraphs, in their visits to us, with the applauding angels, have proclaim'd, that he shall be their redeemer—that one day he will raise the dead to life, and that we ourselves shall see them. Behold, the Most High turns his face from us, and now descends to the earth. How wonderful, O God, art thou in thy judgments! How inscrutable are the wise designs of thy providence! Thou art eternally the same, ever perfect, ever unchangeable! Let us sing praises to thee, our Creator! And let thy blessings be pour'd on these mine offspring! With faces veil'd the cherubim and seraphim worship before thine exalted throne! Thee immortal men adore from this sacred earth!—thee mortal men, whom thou slayest, adore in the dust! Thus he utter'd the effusions of his soul, while his fix'd eyes follow'd the divine effulgence.

The Almighty now drew near to the earth. From a towering assemblage of clouds, Eloa saw the great Messiah, and there, wrapt in obscurity, in gentle accents thus spake. O thou gracious Redeemer! how greatly is thy labouring mind distress'd, while thus imploring and procuring mercy for sinful man! What finite intellect can comprehend this mystery!—can comprehend the depths of sovereign wisdom, and of grace divine.—But let me be silent, and, wrapt in wonder, adore! Hail race of man, soon will ye be bless'd like me! Thus spake Eloa, and then, stretching out his arms towards the earth, in silence pour'd forth his benedictions.

God now descended on mount Tabor, and, shrouded in a solemn midnight gloom, view'd this whole terraqueous globe, with idolatrous altars and sinners cover'd.

Over its extensive plains was spread the empire of Death, witnessing against man. Now all the Sins, from the creation to the final day of retribution—the Sins of the idolaters, those of Jehovah's servants; the Sins of christians, still more horrid, rose in the clouds, and advanc'd towards the sovereign Judge: before him they arose, in hideous forms, unshrouded from night. They arose from the abyss in which they were bury'd by the guilty heart, that, ungrateful, rebell'd against the all-gracious Creator. The hideous host was led by the Crimes of those capacious souls, who beheld thee, O sacred Virtue! in all thy celestial beauty, yet obey'd not thy pleasing dictates; but self-convicted, with black impiety, and redoubled guilt, oppos'd the generous feelings of humanity and heavenly grace, struggling in their breasts, and witnessing between themselves and God. Towering in gigantic height, they appear'd before him who directs the thunder, and guides the forked lightning: for inexorable conscience, with irresistible voice, summon'd them to approach. An universal accusation now ascended to Heaven. On the fluttering wings of the wind, were borne the soft sighs of suffering virtue. Loud as the roar of waves rushing impetuous, resounded the groans and lamentations of the dying from the bloody field of slaughter, witnessing against the ambitious potentates of the earth, and the voice of thunder was given to the blood of the martyrs, crying, O thou who in thine awful hand holdest the balance of judgment! behold the innocent blood that has been shed!—shed for thy sake, O thou most holy, just and true! The Almighty then revolving in his infinite mind, the virtues of the various orders of intelligent beings who had continu'd faithful, and the actions of the guilty race of man, his anger was kindled. He rested on Tabor's lofty summit. The earth then shook to its centre, and he withheld it, lest its dust should be scatter'd through the immensity of space. Then turning towards Eloa, the seraph, who at once knew the intimations of the divine countenance, ascended into the air. As from the ark of the covenant rose the sky-supported cloud, the

miraculous guide of the people of Israel, and visible type of Bethlehem's Son, when led by Moses, they from desart to desart mov'd their tents; thus silent on a midnight cloud stood the seraph, with his eyes fix'd on the Mount of Olives. Him the blessed Saviour then beheld, and instantly hasted to Gethsemane, to pour out his soul in fervent prayer for man. Fill'd with inward distress he went, follow'd by three of his disciples. These he at length left behind, and withdrew alone to a silent solitary spot, where, unobserv'd by man, he might give vent to the great, the painful sensations that swell'd his heart.

Thou hast led me, O harmonious muse of Sion! to the sanctuary; but the Holy of Holies I have not seen. Oh had I the soft melodious voice with which the exalted seraph sings: did the terrific trump, which shook the solid base of Sion's mount, resound from my lips: did thunder speak from my right hand the thoughts which the celestial harps cannot resound! Yet, O thou Messiah! should I fail in singing thy passion, the mighty conflicts of thy great, thy generous, thy tender soul!

Thou, O Moses! once didst boldly pray to see the great Jehovah face to face; but wast conceal'd in the sheltering rock, while the glory of God pass'd by; yet from afar didst behold the resplendent beauty of the Eternal: I am more frail than thee; yet may the Spirit of Truth overshadow me with his downy wings, and help my feeble sight, that I may see the blessed Jesus struggling in the agonies of his dreadful passion!

Prostrate in the dust of the earth, which trembled with silent terror, lay the gracious Messiah, with his guiltless eyes and hands lift up towards Tabor. Seen by no mortal eye, his looks were fix'd on his Father's face, while his labouring heart swell'd with perturbations terrible: distressful thoughts, fill'd with horror, press'd in swift succession on his soul, and his whole frame shook with unutterable agony. His terrors still encreas'd: the anguish of his heavenly mind became more intense; and instead of sweat, the starting blood trickled from the face of the adorable, the gracious Sufferer. Then raising his

head from the ground, his streaming tears, mix'd with the purple drops, while lifting up his hands and eyes, he thus address'd the Sovereign Judge:

O my Father! when this world was form'd, soon dy'd the first of men—soon was each hour mark'd with dying sinners! Already have ages pass'd blasted by thy curse. Now is arriv'd the awful time, when by my death I shall purchase immortality for man. When the earth was scarcely form'd, ere the mouldering corse return'd to dust, I chose this hour of suffering, and ardent cry'd, Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God! Now—now is arriv'd the awful time! Hail ye who sleep in God, ye shall awake!—I who form'd the earth was born to die!—to die on its surface!—to die that man might live! But how heavily the lot of mortality hangs upon me! O thou who holdest the sword of justice! let the hours of anguish pass with rapid flight! To thee, O Father! every thing is possible—let therefore this bitter cup pass from me!—Cease—oh cease to pour on me the terrors of death!—Yet not my will, but thine be done. My uplifted eyes watch at midnight, and can no longer weep: my trembling arms are stretch'd towards thee for help: but alas! I do not find it—Faint with weeping, I sink to the ground—To my grave!—But I resign myself to thy will—thy will, O Father! be done.

Having thus spoke, he lay prostrate on his face in solemn silence, then raising himself up on his trembling arms, look'd forward into the gloom. Here pass'd before him terrifying images of eternal death. He beheld reprobate souls curse the day of their creation. He heard the dismal howls of the deep resounding abyss: the wing'd voice of anguish, like falling cataracts, bellowing loud. Gentle streams, which delusive call'd to soft repose and balmy sleep, but calling in vain, augmented the lamentations of the deceiv'd. Then the voices of mankind sunk in one boundless sigh of deep-rooted despair. Jesus sympathiz'd in their distress, and, fill'd with unutterable compassion, felt their misery.

Adramelech from a lonely rock had long view'd the

Messiah; but now descending, he was seen on the earth. Before him he beheld with triumph and exultation a suicide reeking in his own blood: the accents of whose despair, and the bitter sighs of returning humanity and remorse, echo'd through all the neighbouring hills. The apostate spirit then drawing near, resolv'd to mock the great Messiah. With disdainful pride in his haughty eye, and lost in an ocean of impious thoughts he stood, resolving to give to his infernal ideas a voice like that of the black bursting cloud: but Jesus turning, and casting on him that majestic look of awful dignity with which he shall judge the world, the rancorous spirit felt the powerful glance, and trembling sunk abas'd. Bewilder'd amidst the whirl of impetuous crowding thoughts, he stood without thought. All around him was void: no longer did he see the heavens and the earth; no longer the Messiah: himself alone he beheld. At length with difficulty collecting his weaken'd strength, he fled.

The Mediator now leaving the gloomy solitude, walk'd towards his disciples, that after such suffering, such lonely anguish, he might enjoy the human solace of seeing the face of man. Silent he drew near, and found them asleep.

The surrounding heavens now rejoic'd, and solemniz'd the second sabbath since the creation; one still more sacred than the first. At length, the final, the decisive day of judgment being pass'd, the third will arise with unutterable glory, and extend throughout eternity. At its celebration the Messiah himself will preside. The host of Heaven now celebrated the most sacred hours. All knew that the great high-priest was accomplishing the redemption: for thus God had said:

When the polar thunders shall roll around you, and with them the harmony of the spheres, chang'd to the ocean's roar, shall join the dreadful concert: when ranks of wandering stars, thousands of solar miles above, and thousands beneath, shall tremble thro' infinite space: when upon you come the terrors of the Lord, and from your heads suddenly fall your golden crowns; then has the Messiah begun his severest sufferings.

Now sang the heavenly host, Past is the first hour of the exalted sufferings of the great Messiah, the Redeemer of Man! Past is the hour which to the good brings eternal rest.

Meanwhile the Messiah stood looking on his disciples, whom he saw fast in the arms of sleep. Still glow'd the face of the exalted James. Thus grave and serene sleeps the happy Christian before his death. On the affectionate John reclin'd Peter; but he was not like John, fill'd with smiling tranquillity. Over the belov'd disciple, Salim, one of his guardian angels still hover'd. Jesus now said, Simon Peter, thou sleep'st! what, couldst thou not watch with me one hour? Ah soon will quiet slumbers cease to close those weeping eyes! Watch and pray lest the tempter surprise thee. Thou, indeed, art willing; but thine heavenly spirit is press'd down by thine earthly frame. Jesus then return'd, and again fell on his face, and pray'd.

Now veil'd in the sable mantle of night, Abbadona came, and thus to himself complain'd: Ah! where shall I at last find the gracious Saviour, the Redeemer? Alas! unworthy am I to see this best of men. Yet Satan has seen him!—O thou divine prophet! where—oh where shall I seek thee!—where shall I find thee? Through every desart have I rov'd. Every river have I trac'd from its source. In the solitude of every sequester'd grove, my trembling feet have wander'd. To the cedar have I said, Oh tell me—in rustling whispers tell me, dost thou conceal him? To the hanging mountains I cry'd, Bow down your solitary tops at my tears, that I may see the divine Jesus, who, perhaps, sleeps on your summits! Him, thought I, the Creator may have led under the shady covert of a purple evening cloud: or Wisdom and Meditation, which delight in solitude, may have invited him to withdraw to some cave of the rocks. But he is not in the Heavens! he is not in the bosom of the earth! I am unworthy to see thy face—ah, unworthy am I, O Jesus! to behold thy benignant smiles! Thou art the only Saviour of men!—Me thou wilt not save!—Thou hear'st not the

plaintive voice of an immortal!—Alas! thou art only the Saviour of men!

He then saw before him the sleeping disciples. Near him lay John, smiling in his placid slumbers. He saw him, and struck with fear, trembling, drew back. Long he paus'd: but at length cry'd, If thou art he whom I seek—If thou art the godlike man who came to redeem mankind from sin and misery, with tears—with incessant tears—with everlasting sighs will I hail thee, thou lovely youth! Thy countenance has the lineaments of celestial purity, and the traces of a tender and a generous soul. Yes, thou art he! Thee have I sought—sweet tranquillity, the rich reward of virtue, hovers round thee! But I tremble at seeing thy soft repose. Turn—oh turn thy face from me; or I must look aside, and weep.

While Abbadona was thus speaking, Peter awaking, call'd out, Ah John! I have seen the Master in a dream; at me he look'd, with a displeasure, mingled with pity and gentle mercy.

This the fallen seraph heard, and stood amaz'd. Now surrounded with the silence of the night, he distinguish'd a mournful voice. Then inclining his attentive ear to the place whence it came, he lower bow'd, and more distinctly heard the soft and doleful accents. Fearful and astonish'd he stood, while from his heart flow'd these plaintive thoughts.

Shall I proceed, and view the man who there in sounds of anguish and distress, struggles with death, and the thoughts of judgment? Shall I see the blood of the murder'd, who, perhaps, quietly returning home, through the shades of night, quicken'd his steps, to embrace his affectionate wife, and to caress with paternal pleasure his lisping children, hanging about the neck of their mother, when some lurking foe, some barbarian in the dark, bent on murder, gave him a mortal wound! Perhaps his life was crown'd with virtue, and his deportment adorn'd by wisdom! Ah shall I see him? Shall I see his dying pangs?—his florid cheeks change to deadly paleness? Shall I hear his last groans—his expiring sighs? Ah blood

murderously shed! terrific blood of innocence!—thou bearest witness against me at that judgment seat where compassion finds no place!—where the soft voice of mercy is not heard! I was concern'd in seducing the human race—in rendering them subject to death!—The blood!—the innocent blood here shed; and that which through successive ages will flow, is spilt by me. Ah! I hear its thundering voice, the horrible voice, with which it calls to God for vengeance—for vengeance everlasting on my guilty head! Yet I must look into the receptacles of your remains!—I must gaze on your bones, ye children of Adam! My conscience, like a furious warrior, rises in arms against me!—My wandering looks rove around, and are powerfully led to scenes of death —to the putrefaction of the dreary sepulchre! Thou silence of death, how I tremble before thee! Yet he whom I have irritated, comes not in silence—comes not in the peaceful night! Thunders and clouds go before him! At his step a storm arises! The word of his mouth is death! —is judgment without mercy!

Such were his thoughts while he advanc'd with slow and dilatory step towards the mournful voice. Now he beheld the gracious Saviour, who, with his face to the earth, still lay in humble prostration, praying with uplifted hands. Abbadona stepp'd back, and, fill'd with fear, was silently creeping round him, when Gabriel advancing from the thick concealing shade of tufted trees, Abbadona saw him, and trembling, retir'd. The inhabitant of Heaven now drew near, and bowing his ear over the Saviour, withheld in his wondering eye the starting tear. Absorb'd in thought he stood, listening with reverential awe to the Messiah, with an ear which, at the distance of a thousand times a thousand miles, hears the step of the Eternal, and the songs of the enraptur'd spirits that surround the throne. He now distinguish'd the soft trilling sound of the slow flowing blood of the trembling Mediator, as it ran from vein to vein. Much louder did he hear in his divine heart the inexpressible, the heavenly sighs which swelling with mercy, and with

love to man, were more delightful to the Father's ear, than the song of all the heavenly host. The seraph thus discover'd the Saviour's passion, and folding his hands, with his eyes lift up to Heaven, rose into the clouds.

Abbadona seeing Gabriel, and a multitude of the heavenly host, with their eyes beaming compassion, in expressive silence, looking down on the Messiah, remain'd aghast, and trembling, cast on him a look of mingled fear and surprise. The Saviour now from the ensanguin'd dust slowly rais'd his face, at which redoubled terror encompass'd the fallen seraph: yet he again recover'd: again gave vent to the new ideas which fill'd his mind. Sometimes he suppress'd his timorous thoughts, and sometimes disturb'd the silence of the night by his sighs and lamentations.

O thou who here struggiest with death! cry'd he; by what name shall I call thee? One form'd of the dust, a son of earth, a sinner ripe for judgment, shudders at the last day, and at the opening tomb.—One form'd of the dust! —Yes, thou art—but methinks a divine lustre adorns thy human form! Thine eye, from which shines innocence, and truth, and love to God and man, bespeaks thee superior to the grave and to corruption! Thy face is not that of a sinner!—nor thus looks the wretch rejected of the Most High! Surely thou art more than man! Methinks I here perceive a mystery deeper than my thoughts can fathom! A bright labyrinth all divine!—Ah! I still discover more!—But, who is he?—O fallen spirit! turn—turn thine eyes away from him.—A sudden thought has darted into my astonish'd mind—A great, a dreadful idea! Alas! an awful resemblance do I perceive—Fly, fly, ye dread surmises!—Stream not around me, ye terrors of eternal death—Ah! I perceive a conceal'd resemblance of the great Messiah, who descending in his flaming chariot, rush'd upon us, arm'd with ten thousand thunders, and hurling destruction, drove us before him, vanquish'd and dismay'd. Then immortality became a curse; life eternal death. Alas! we had before fled from innocence—from every celestial joy, the lot

of the righteous!—Jehovah himself had ceas'd to be our father! Once, while hurl'd headlong through the deep abyss, I turn'd my face, and saw him behind me coming —saw the dreadful Son of God!—lightning flash'd from his eyes!—High he stood—his chariot then the sable seat of judgment—Under him was darkness and death—Him had the Father cloth'd with omnipotence!—him, the radiant image of his mercy, had he arm'd with destruction! At his thunders, and the force of his avenging arm, Nature shudder'd, and all the depths of creation trembled! No more did I see him—My eye was lost in the palpable gloom! Thus confounded, I was carry'd away through storms and thunder—through the howlings of affrighted Nature, despairing, though immortal!—I see him still!—still I see him!—his face had something that resembled that of this man here bow'd in the dust—this more than man!

Here he paus'd, and continu'd for some time as if lost in thought; then in a low voice cry'd, Ah! is he——is he the Son of the Eternal?—the Messiah?—the dreadful Victor?——But he suffers!—he is struggling with death! ——boundless is the anguish that shakes his divine soul! —he laments in the dust!—his swelling veins, press'd by the anguish of his benevolent mind, bedew his face with blood!——To me no misery is sure unknown, yet I know not how to name his anguish. Remote in distant gloom I see new thoughts big with wonders approach, In mazy labyrinths involv'd. The Son of the great Jehovah, the brightness of his Father's glory, descends from Heaven; assumes the human form; preaches repentance; suffers for man, and, to give life and immortality to his mortal brethren, dies!—This Satan himself confirms by what he relates of him, and his discourses. Besides, with what awful reverence the angels approach! Even Nature seems to observe a reverential silence, as if her Creator was present. Oh, if thou art the dread Messiah, the only begotten of the Father, I ought to fly, lest seeing me trembling at thy feet, thy wrath be kindled, and thou instantly sit in judgment against me!—

But thou look'st not on me!—Yet to thee my thoughts are not unknown.—May I venture to indulge the ideas which now first begin to arise in my mind?—Of men art thou the Saviour! and not of the more exalted angels! O gracious Messiah! hadst thou condescended to become a seraph; hadst thou deign'd to enlighten us by thine instructions; hadst thou for us lain extended in the celestial plains, as here on earth, and with supplicating heart, and hands and eyes lift up to the throne of the Majesty on High, how would I then, O thou divine——how would I then have embrac'd thee! With what joyful transports should I have hail'd my Saviour and my Lord! What rapturous hosannahs should I sing! with what ecstacy should I join the harmony of the harp to my exulting strains!—Ye children of Adam, the favourites of the Most High, may the curse of everlasting fire fall on the heads of those who, ungrateful, spurn at his offer'd grace, and on each heart insensible to the boundless love of your Redeemer! Ye tribes of the redeem'd, that shall hereafter resort to him, should you profane the sacred blood which drops from that face, may this blood rise up against you, and ye be esteem'd his cruel murderers! —To you I call, ye apostates from grace—to you who, after having tasted of the heavenly gift, shall draw back to perdition!—when the dreadful gulph of eternity shall first lie before you, and ye are fill'd with the tremendous thought, that you, like us, are cast out from God, the First and the Best of Beings!——then will I, looking through gloomy tracts of misery and night, on the new distresses of your immortal souls, cry, Hail torment everlasting! Hail misery without end! This ye have chosen for a shadow! for this ye have resign'd everlasting felicity! let this then be your portion, and your reward! Indeed, the view of the rapturous transports of the glorify'd spirits, who, with wise circumspection through a life of virtue, enter'd into eternity, would frighten me from Heaven, and I should fly from their transcendent glory—But looking through dreary tracks of misery and blackest night, on the newly open'd

wounds of your immortal souls, ye sinners, again will I cry, Hail, misery everlasting! Hail, torment without end!—Then will I tear myself from the iron arms of Hell, and ascending to the throne of the exalted Saviour, with a voice that shall pervade both Heaven and Earth, will I cry, Oh! why dost thou, Most Gracious, redeem only the repentant sinners of the human race, and not the angels? 'Tis true, Hell hates thee—but I, forsaken—I, who feel more noble sentiments, do not hate thee.—Too long—alas! too long, have I, weary of my existence, and of a dreadful immortality, pour'd forth lamentations, and tears of blood! Abbadona having thus given a loose to his disturb'd thoughts, ascended into the air and disappear'd.

The Messiah now, a second time, arose from the dust, again to behold the face of man; and again the heavenly host rejoic'd and sang, Past is the second hour of the exalted sufferings of the great Messiah, the Redeemer of Man! Past is the hour which to the good brings eternal rest!

But soon the blessed Saviour left his slumbering disciples, and went a third time to prostrate himself before the Sovereign Judge. Around him the sable curtain of night was spread over the heavens, and he was encompass'd by the deepest gloom. Thus the last night before the day of awful retribution, will be cloth'd in the blackest veil of darkness, hastily bringing on the coming morn. The loud thunder, and the sounding trump, will then soon be heard, soon the joining bones, and the buzzing field, teeming with resurrection. Then from his exalted throne, Jesus, once a mortal, shall call the world to judgment.

The Father, now looking down from Tabor, saw the agonies of the Messiah. Below, at the foot of the mountain, stood Eloa, silent; his head was envelop'd in clouds, and his pensive looks were directed to the earth. The Most High now call'd Eloa, when the seraph instantly arose in silence through the gloom, and stood before God. Then to Eloa, the Eternal said, Thou hast seen the suf-

ferings of the Messiah; go sing to him a triumphant song, of all the hosts of the saints, that from his sufferings and death shall be sanctify'd, and rais'd to immortal life. Heaven shall resound with hallelujahs, when he shall be made their King, and plac'd at my right hand.

Trembling, with lowest reverence, the seraph answer'd. But when face to face I behold the great Messiah, disfigur'd by his bloody sweat: when I see the benignant smile that adorn'd his countenance, lost in the melancholy traces of his inward anguish: and in his pleasing features distorted by grief, can but obscurely discern his greatness, shall not I be struck speechless? Will not the strong emotions I shall then feel, prevent the harmony of my celestial song? Shall I not be encompass'd by all the Saviour's terrors, and even by the image of death? O almighty Father! may I presume to beg that thou wouldst not send me. Alas! much too mean am I to sing triumphant hymns to the Messiah, thy suffering Son.

With mild grace, God reply'd, Who rais'd thy flaming courage high above the Heavens? From whom hadst thou thy triumphant song, when my thunders, cast from the hand of the Messiah, pursu'd the chief of the rebel host, and thou thyself didst ride on the wings of the tempest? Who strengthen'd thine heart, and enabled thee to see the death of the first man, and in him the death of all the children of Adam? Haste, I myself will lead thee, and shouldst thou, at the near view of his sufferings, tremble, he will teach thee to mingle with thy tremulous accents, the pleasing sounds of triumph.

Thus spake the Almighty. The seraph went forth, Jordan roar'd, and thunder issu'd from Tabor. Slowly he descended from the mount of Olives, when dreadful gusts of midnight winds wafted to him the suppliant sounds utter'd by the great Messiah, and a silent tremor seiz'd the astonish'd seraph. But when advancing nearer, he observ'd his distressful countenance, that shew'd his bitter anguish, he stood fix'd to the earth, depriv'd of all his native beauty and heavenly splendor; and seeming

no longer an high immortal seraph, he resembled an inhabitant of the earth. Now the Saviour cast on him a look of dignity, mingled with a gracious smile, and with the glance, the seraph's immortal beauty and celestial radiance return'd, when, rising in a cloud, skirted with gold, he thus triumphant sung:

Thou, Son of the Most High, how transporting are the thoughts inspir'd by a glance from thee! How happy am I in being found worthy to know thy sensations! from afar to perceive the thoughts of the divine Mediator, in the trying hour of humiliation! Over thee hangs a veil of the deepest mysteries impenetrable to the host of Heaven. No end do I see of the great ideas, big with mercy and with grace. I, a momentary thought of the Omniscient God, a particle in the expanse of creation, like a sun that rises to enlighten a floating mass of earth, call'd a world, am found worthy to look beyond the measur'd circle of finitude! Blessed am I! bless'd be the time of my creation! Blessed am I, in being immortal! Ye devout, ye sacred tremblings, with which I am now fill'd, continue to transport me beyond the limits of my finite ideas; bear me from this darkness to the glory of God! I hail the Father and the Son! Now do I experience what the children of the resurrection shall feel! As from deep amazement the Mediator has awak'd me, so ye blessed children of Adam! shall he awaken you! This joyful tremor, this rapturous exultation ye also shall feel, when ye, transported, rise to eternal life! Then thou, O holy Saviour of men, who here liest prostrate in the dust, shall sit on thy throne!—and, O tremendous day! sit in judgment on the world! With what effusions of joy will thy faithful servants behold thee on thy judgment seat! With eyes sparkling with rapture, they will view the radiant marks of thy wounds, the memorials of thy love, imprinted by thy dying on the cross. Thee, O Jesus! shall they celebrate with ceaseless hallelujahs, while before thee the trumpet of the angel of death, and the thunder that surrounds the throne, shall be silent. Then shall the depths bow down, and the high places lift up

their hands to the Judge, while the last day shall resign its declining light at the foot of the eternal throne. Then shall thou gather the righteous about thee. They shall stand in thy presence, that they may behold thee as thou art. They shall transported feel that they are immortal, and shall triumph in the glorious thought, that because thou livest, they also shall live, while they shall forever possess thy love, and forever share thy glory!

Thus sang Eloa, while the divine Redeemer bless'd the adoring seraph, with a look of grace and benignity: then bow'd towards Heaven in tearful silence. Thus the expiring lamb, without blemish, and without spot, wept, while he lay bleeding on the sacred altar. The seraphs, who with downcast look had view'd the Redeemer, unable longer to bear the sight of his anguish, withdrew. Gabriel kept his station, but veil'd his face. Eloa also remain'd; but wrapt his head in a midnight cloud.

The earth stood still. Thrice it shook, as if preparing for its dissolution, and thrice it was restrain'd by the Great Jehovah. The Saviour now rising from the ground, the host of Heaven again sang in jubilant strains, Past is the third hour of his exalted sufferings: past is the hour which to the repentant sinner brings everlasting rest. Thus sang the heavenly host, while God, turning his face, ascended to his eternal throne.

THE

MESSIAH.

BOOK VI.

The Argument.

The Messiah is seiz'd and bound. The assembled priests are fill'd with consternation at being inform'd that the guard were struck dead. Their fears are removed by the arrival of a second and a third messenger. Jesus being taken before Annas, Phila goes thither, and brings him to Caiaphas. John expresses the agitation of his mind. Portia, Pilate's wife, comes to see Jesus. The speeches of Philo and Caiaphas, with the evidence given by the suborn'd witnesses. Jesus, on declaring that he is the Son of God, is condemn'd. Eloa and Gabriel discourse on his sufferings. Portia, deeply affected, withdraws, and prays to the chief of the gods. Peter, in deep distress, tells John that he has deny'd his Master, then leaves him, and deplores his guilt.

THE

MESSIAH.

BOOK VI.

AS the dying Christian, when approaching death shakes each relaxing nerve, prizes the solemn moments more than he esteem'd whole days before; for then his Almighty Father claims his last obedience; the last struggles of his virtue, which, flowing from a heart now freed from grovelling passions, rises towards the Source of Perfection; the soul then plumes her wings, and soars on high, numbering the sacred minutes by fervent prayer; while the all-seeing God looks down propitious, and angels prepare the immortal crown: so the hours of the great, the mystic Sabbath became more solemn, as the gracious, the divine Redeemer hasted to bleed and die. Eloa, rapt in the contemplation of the great Messiah's distress, and the importance of this sacred time, soon unveil'd his face to Gabriel, and thus address'd his celestial friend:

Didst thou see his sufferings?—I tremble still—Didst thou behold the anguish of his great and benevolent mind? My admiration and surprise, no words in our celestial language can express!—Alas! what has he still to suffer!—On every moment seems to hang an eternity?

Thousands of years, answer'd Gabriel, have elaps'd since first I strove to learn the future wonders of his love—to obtain some knowledge, though obscure, of the Messiah's promis'd grace to man. Yet how have I err'd? Oh let us admire in silence. We are encompass'd by an holy labyrinth of wonders. This place is fill'd with sepul-

chres: yet the angels will one day awake these dead; meanwhile soft be their slumbers. Then Jesus—But ah behold! Who is he that advances with gesture wild, and with uplifted lights encompass'd? A rebel sent from the deep abyss of Hell!—What a base multitude! He who equally created the grains of sand, and the flaming suns —who equally reigns over the worm and the seraph, knows their inmost thoughts, and is fully acquainted with all their vile designs!—and their leader, their leader, O Eloa! shall not walk thus, when the last trump shall call forth the dust from those hills which cover them from the Judge! Thou, ungrateful traitor, wilt not thus elated walk.

Now the raging multitude advanc'd, waving their torches, and roving with prying eyes, through the mazy groves, and the dark obscure. The great Messiah beheld the traitor, and now the night in blackest clouds hung over him, spreading terror all around. Damp horror seiz'd the mind of the perfidious Judas; but defying the powerful admonition, and arming himself against the voice of conscience, he softly cry'd, Where is he? His favourites saw him—they saw him on Mount Tabor, array'd in celestial splendor; but they have not yet seen him in bonds! This they shall now see, and forget to build themselves tabernacles of joy!—Yet, O my coward heart, thou tremblest! Can the coolness and gloom of the night shake the courage of a man? Peace, thou fluttering, trembling disturber! All will soon be over! Then will I build a less visionary tabernacle. Thus he spake to himself, and again hasted forward.

The Saviour seeing them approach, said to himself, Far—very far are the eternal mansions from this abode of sinners. The way I walk leads to the grave, yet will I walk in it. At length it will shine refulgent, when here I shall bid the dead arise, and the judgment seat shall be reveal'd.

Judas Iscariot led the band. The priests had commanded that he should take armed men, and seek for Jesus among the sepulchres. These were order'd to bind

him, and to bring him before the council. Judas knew the place of solemn prayer, the solitary recess where, during the silence of the night, he us'd to pour out his soul to the Most High, in fervent supplications for man. The ungrateful traitor had said to the band, Whomsoever I kiss, is he: take him, and lead him away. But still the night had mercy on that perfidious disciple, and delay'd his giving the insidious kiss. Yet soon the band with impotent fury attack'd the sleeping disciples; when the Redeemer, moving towards the brutal sinners, with awful dignity, said, Whom seek ye? With rage and tumult, waving their flaming lights, they cry'd, Jesus the Nazarene. Now were come the other disciples; and now the angels who had retir'd again came, and fix'd their eyes on the Messiah, who, with that divine composure with which he had commanded the agitated waves to be still, answer'd, I am he. Struck by his voice, they all fell speechless at his feet, and with them Judas. Thus lie in the martial field the dead. Thus stretch'd among the slain lie the most furious warriors, when the sedate chief, from the quiet centre of the battle, sends around him destruction. But at length they awoke from their trance, and the traitor also arose from the earth. Over him hover'd the angel of death, and he seem'd on the point of being call'd to judgment; but concealing the horrors of his mind, and the rancor of his heart, with an affected air of serene friendship, he went up to the holy Jesus, and crying, Hail, Master! saluted him. Now had he fill'd up the measure of his guilt, and by the basest and most impious action, had, like an infernal spirit, open'd a way to the deep abyss of terror and dismay. Yet the meek, the humble, the divine Jesus, fill'd with compassion, look'd up to the traitor with an eye of pity, saying, Ah Judas! betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss! Ah unhappy Judas! wherefore art thou come? Then gently resign'd himself up to the multitude.

Peter no sooner beheld this, than his passions being enflam'd, he, with eager impatience, broke through the disciples, drew his sword, and rushing, with an intrepid

countenance, on the multitude, struck at the servant of the high-priest, and cut off his ear. But the gracious Friend of mankind, smiling benignant, instantly heal'd the wound, and then looking on Peter, check'd his ardour, saying, O my disciple! put up thy sword, and be at peace. Know'st thou not, that were I to pray for help to my Father, he would send me from Heaven legions of mighty angels? but how then would the Scripture be fulfill'd? Then turning to the multitude, who rudely bound him, he cry'd, Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and with staves to seize me? as against a vile malefactor, who had escap'd from the hands of Justice? Were I not daily with you teaching in the temple? To you have I taught the way of life. You have I instructed to shun the path of death and of destruction. Ye then laid not your hands on me. But this is your hour for accomplishing this work of darkness. Here he ceas'd, and now was come to the brook of Cedron.

In the mean time the council of the priests and elders assembled in the stately palace of Caiaphas, and there remain'd agitated on the waves of fluctuating hope. From the inward hall arose their anxious murmurs, which descending down the marble balustrade, struck with motionless astonishment the greedy ears of the alarm'd populace, who trembling bless'd, or stammering vented their maledictions, regardless of the golden lamps that blaz'd along the polish'd columns. The priests now growing impatient, said to each other, None of our messengers are return'd. What can detain them? What means this delay? He who has betray'd his master, has, perhaps, also betray'd us. Or, the Nazarene, according to his frequent practice, has, by some illusion, escap'd.

Thus were they discoursing, impatient and perplex'd by various apprehensions, when one of their messengers hastily enter'd the hall. His hair stood erect; and a cold sweat bedew'd his pallid countenance, which was distorted by fear and terror. For some time he stood speechless, while all beheld him with looks of astonish-

ment; but at length recovering, he cry'd in a trembling voice, Most reverend priests and rabbies, we went according to your orders, and at last found Jesus of Nazareth beyond the brook, not far from the sepulchres. The sepulchres fill'd with horror did not affright us: but the sky was hung with blacker clouds than ever the eyes of man beheld! Yet the band march'd forward, while I stood at a distance. Soon I saw the prophet. Then was I seiz'd—I know not how it was;—but then was I seiz'd with a shivering, that shook my whole frame!—Yet though they stood so near, they did not know him; but rush'd on those that were about him. He then cry'd with a firm voice, Whom do ye seek? Our men, still undaunted, call'd out aloud, Jesus the Nazarene. Then —methinks I hear him still!—All my joints tremble!—He answer'd, as with the voice of Death, I am he! No sooner had he spoke the words, than they all fell on their faces!—They now lie dead!—I only have escap'd to bring the news of their death.

The priests at hearing these dreadful words, chang'd colour, and remain'd as motionless as the rocks. Philo, the harden'd Philo, was alone able to speak, and his rage overcoming his fear, he cry'd with a furious voice, Thou, wretch, art either one of his disciples, or art affrighted by the phantoms of the night. The open sepulchres made thee giddy, and fill'd thee with the thoughts of death. Fancy represented to thee the dead. The men we sent live; they would not fall down at a word.

While he yet spake, another messenger enter'd, and cry'd, Ye holy priests and fathers, much have we suffer'd. Before him have we sunk to the earth; for his look was dreadful, and death was in the words of his mouth. But yet we have taken and bound him. He himself held out his hands, and suffer'd us to bind them. We took him, trembling, lest we should again hear the powerful, the fatal words. But now he comes along, with silent patience, and has already enter'd the walls of Jerusalem.

Scarce had he finish'd when a third messenger enter'd,

whose looks of joy shew'd that he brought welcome tidings to the enemies of heavenly grace, and spotless virtue. Bowing he spoke, and, in glad accents cry'd, Blessed be you, ye priests of the living God, and ye venerable fathers! may all who rise up against you, and all the enemies of the Lord, be destroy'd like this Galilean! We are bringing him bound with bonds, which neither his words nor smiling countenance will be able to unloose. All his followers have left him, and he is now near the palace. May God give you his blood!

He had no sooner concluded, than Satan enter'd the assembly, and with him an infernal joy that fascinated the priests, causing to hover before their eyes the appearance of the streaming blood of Christ, his paleness and approaching death; while the voice of his torments flow'd to their ears. They then imagin'd his lips clos'd in everlasting silence, while over his bones pass'd the feet of the saints. Long did they remain under this delirium; but Jesus not appearing, their fears and rage at length return'd. They then sent other messengers, and with them went Philo.

The guard had stopp'd by the way, and taken Jesus to Annas, one of the chief priests; for, while the heavy vapours of the night were falling, the hoary priest had left his bed to see the man who, he imagin'd, had spread confusion through Judea. John follow'd at a distance. Genial sleep had now fled from his eyes, and melancholy sat on his faded cheek. At length, recollecting that this priest was void of that rancour which corroded the heart of Caiaphas, he overcame his timorous dejection, and entering the hall, saw his beloved Lord, standing as a criminal before Annas, who thus spake:

Thou art to be try'd by Caiaphas. If thou art innocent, as the great works thou hast done have spread abroad thy fame, not only the nations of the earth, but the God of Abraham, and his children, will bless thee! Say then what hast thou taught? Who were thy disciples? Didst thou teach the laws of Moses? Didst thou—didst thy disciples observe them?

Annas now paus'd; he wonder'd at the prophet-like mien with which Jesus stood before him; and admir'd his compos'd dignity, undebas'd by pride. The Saviour condescended thus to answer. Freely I taught in the synagogues and in the temple; whither the Jews always resort. Why then askest thou me? ask them who heard me.

While he thus spake, Philo rush'd in. The assembly was instantly in a tumult. Then an officer, who had the soul of a slave, committed, against the gracious Saviour, an action of such mean inhumanity, that it was thought worthy of being foretold by the prophets. Philo, with imperious voice, now cry'd, Away with this seditious fellow, that he may receive sentence of death; on which the guard of the blessed Redeemer again seiz'd him, and, unresisted, took him thence.

John no sooner saw the Messiah in Philo's power, than his face became overspread with a mortal paleness; his eyes were dimm'd; he trembled, and grief took possession of his heart. At last, with unsteady step, leaving the palace, he beheld at a distance, the moving torches. I will follow—No—I dare not now follow thee, cry'd he; yet I entreat thee, O thou best of men! that if God has decreed that they shall be suffer'd to put thee to death, I who have lov'd thee, and still love thee, with an affection that exceeds that of a brother, may be permitted to die with thee! that I may not see thee struggling in the agonies of death, nor hear the last—last blessing proceed from thy faltering lips!—Is there no deliverer?—no deliverer upon earth?—none in Heaven? Do ye too sleep, ye angels, who sang, when his exulting mother brought him forth? Alas! when your hosannas resounded in her ears, little did she think of his terrible death!—There is no other deliverer, but thee alone, O God! the deliverer of the living and the dead! O thou omnipotent Father of Mankind, have mercy on me, and let him not die!—Let not him die, who is the most holy of all the children of Adam!—O thou Source of Mercy! give these murderers—these cruel murderers a heart!

fill their souls with the gentle feelings of humanity!—Ah! I no longer see him! the moving lights disappear!—Now—now—they sentence him to die!—May their cruel souls melt, O Jesus, at beholding thy suffering virtue!——But who is this roving in the dark? Is it not Peter? He has, perhaps, heard our dear Master condemned to suffer death.——How hastily he walks!——Now he stands still—I no longer hear his footsteps.—How solitary is this place!——How silent this dreadful night!—Ah! this silence is fled.—What tumultuous noise is that?—Perhaps they are hastily, under the covert of the night, dragging him to death, lest the compassion of the people should deliver him—lest the melting stones, or their weeping swords should see his death; and that the angels alone may behold his blood!—Ah! have pity—have pity on him—Have pity on me! and, O thou Father of Mercies, who hast compassion on all thy works, let him not die!

Thus, in broken sentences, intermix'd with sighs, he, weeping, gave vent to his thoughts, while he slowly mov'd to the high priest's palace, and there continu'd standing without in the dark.

Philo, the furious leader of the brutal troop that guarded Jesus, hasted before them to the council, where they perceiv'd, by his triumphant look, his lofty deportment, and flaming eyes, that he who had heal'd the sick, and rais'd the dead, was safe in custody, and near the palace. Before they had time to applaud Philo's active zeal, the Messiah was brought in; and seeing him entering, they trembled with mingled rage and joy. With a serene countenance he ascended the steps, and stood before the judgment-seat. All dignity, even the dignity of a mortal prophet, had he now laid aside, and appear'd as tranquil as if only viewing the fall of some murmuring stream; or, as if his mind, after being long elevated with the sublimity of divine converse, was now relax'd, while he indulg'd a short interval of pleasing and familiar contemplations. He retained only some traces of his heaven-born excellence; but these were such as no angel could assume;

and none but those celestial spirits fully discover. Philo and Caiaphas, fill'd with rancour, had their eyes rivetted to the floor. The seat of judgment gave the latter the privilege of speaking first, and the former, from pride, envy, and jealousy, was ready to assume the same privilege: yet both continu'd silent.

On the side of the palace, where a few lonely lamps presented a dim light, was a circular staircase, that led to the upper part of the judgment hall; there leaning on a marble balustrade, Portia, the wife of Pilot, stood among the women, in the bloom of beauty. Her person alone was young; for her mind was adorn'd with the wisdom of riper age. In her the fair blossoms blow'd, and produc'd fruit, as in the mother of the Gracchi, to enrich the degenerate Romans. Prompted by the desire of seeing the great prophet, Portia had hasted thither, with few attendants; for the ostentation of grandeur, and every idea of superiority, she had laid aside. Eternal Providence had directed her steps; and while the rancorous hatred of the priests fill'd her gentle mind with all the vehemence of indignation, she, with admiration and earnest solicitude, saw the benevolent Jesus stand, with calm composure, before his persecutors: With different passions was he view'd by Philo, and thus spake the hypocrite:

Bring him nearer, and bind him faster. But before we begin his trial, let us lift up holy hands to God, and praise him, for having at length pronounc'd his sentence, and his no longer proving us, by keeping silence. Here he lift up his hands, and added; O Jehovah! hear the prayer of thy people. Thus may all perish who rise up against thee; may their name, and the place of their abode be forgotten! May they never be remember'd, except where the bones of the dead lie scatter'd, and where the hills have drank the blood of those who rebel against thee! Yes, we will praise thee! We will praise thee! We will encompass thine altars, rejoicing, and Israel shall be a song of triumph! Yes, the sinner shall bleed; for hitherto Juda hath shut his eyes, and yet did

see: he hath stopp'd his ears, and yet did hear. But at length the wild illusion is vanish'd. We see that he who pretended to have been before Abraham, is bound. Often, indeed, have the people already seen him, and, with manly resolution, plucking off the galling shackles of error, have taken up stones to slay the Blasphemer! Yet again they suffer'd themselves to be deceiv'd.—But, O thou Impostor! this day is the period of their blindness, and of thy deceit! Though the people are but few in number, yet among these, many will, at our call, witness against thee. The high priest will summon them forth. Meanwhile I will charge thee, and call all Judea to witness the truth of the accusation.—I charge thee with blasphemy and sedition. Thou who hast cry'd in a manger, hast made thyself a God; hast pretended to forgive sins, and to raise the dead: but thy mother and thy kindred shall soon see thee expire. Soon shall it be thy turn, and thou shalt be seen stretch'd out in death. Then awake thyself! Thou shalt not enjoy such soft slumbers as those thou hast rais'd. Thou shalt lay down with the slain, whom God has rejected. There sleep—there feel the iron sleep of death, where the revolving sun, and the wandering moon shall drink up corrupted fumes, till Death is satiated, and Golgotha becomes white with human bones. Thus—thus may'st thou lie, and if there be a greater, a more horrid curse, streaming with seven-fold imprecations, which midnight hears, and the howling graves join in uttering, may it alight.——Here the bloated lips of the blasphemer were instantly stiffen'd, and his distorted visage overspread with the paleness of death. In the moment when he began to denounce his dreadful curses, his conscience, in vain, smote him, for having no fear of the Almighty; and now an angel of death, invisible to all besides, with a look of terror, stood before him, and thus address'd the harden'd sinner:

The curses that proceed from thy mouth, O thou most execrable hypocrite! shall fall on thyself. I lift up my eyes to God, to the Avenger, my flaming sword, and vow thy death!—The dark, the bloody hour of thy dis-

solution approaches with rapid wing. Soon will it come. I vow to thee, O thou most flagitious hypocrite! a death as dreadful as ever mortal dy'd, without the least—the least mercy, the least token of relenting favour from him who is thy Creator, and thy Judge. When midnight surrounds thee, when Death walks in the blackest gloom, and Gomorra howling tremendous calls thee, when the king of terrors has struck the important blow, and thy struggling spirit, fill'd with horror, takes its flight; then, in the valley of Benhinnon, shalt thou see my face.

Thus spake the angel of death, in whose lowring front were gather'd clouds of wrath. From his lofty glaring eye flash'd revenge. He stood like a towering rock, and on his shoulders fell his hair, like the sable locks of night. Yet did not the destroyer smite him: he only encompass'd him with his terrors, and made the accents of death roar around him. Philo experienc'd the horrors of the damn'd, as much as a mortal can; horrors rushing upon his soul with instantaneous and overwhelming rapidity. He was struck with sad dismay: his strength fail'd him: he was visibly seiz'd with an universal trembling. Still the terrors of God ran through the very marrow in his bones; but as a worm, crush'd by the foot of the passenger, curls writhing upwards its convuls'd frame, and rears aloft his head; thus, with distorted efforts, he at length, after a long pause, struggling strove to proceed; but only added, What I, overpower'd by the offender's guilt, cover with silence, the issue will unfold. Thou high priest, make haste to try him. He ceas'd, stiffen'd by fear, and unable farther to vent his rage.

The silence now grew more silent. Portia was greatly affected at beholding the Prophet stand serene at the impious and inhuman speech of his inveterate foe; her eye beam'd with joy, her heart beat with redoubled strength, and sublime ideas fill'd her mind. Her eager looks now rang'd over the whole assembly, to see if she could find no generous and noble soul, who, like her, admir'd the Prophet. But she sought in vain, goodness

of heart was not to be found among a people ripe for destruction, who were soon to see in flaming ruins their boasted temple, where Jehovah now no longer dwelt. One, however, she observ'd warming himself at a fire in the outer room with the crowd, who with fierce looks seem'd to reproach him: nor did he appear more gentle in his answers. At last, seeming to lose all his firmness, he turn'd pale; with confusion look'd wildly round, and then fix'd his eyes on Jesus. Ah! said she to herself, that is surely the Prophet's friend; he wishes his deliverance: he, perhaps, seeks to deliver him, and fain would he teach the rude populace to walk in the fair path mark'd out by this wise man; like him to live a life of sobriety and the purest virtue; like him to be the tender friend of the human race, and, without ostentation, to delight in doing good. But they, void of understanding, threaten to drag him also before the priests and elders. This strikes him with terror: he trembles, and wanting the firmness of this good Prophet, shrinks at the menaces of death. Perhaps the afflicted mother of the much injur'd Jesus, suffus'd in tears, besought him to go and save from death the dearest, the best of Sons. Oh with what pain, with what agony of grief, would his amiable, his blessed mother have been fill'd, had she been here, and heard the rancorous speech of that odious Pharisee!—But why—oh why do I feel this deep concern?—Why is my heart fill'd with these strange emotions for a man whose person I never before have seen, though often have I heard of his virtues? Do I wish to have brought forth one who has so noble a mind, and to have given him as a blessing to the world?—O thou mother!—thou happy mother! pride thyself in him, and may thy life flow serene!—May thine eye not see him expire! Yet his death will afford an instructive lesson to the world.

Now the high-priest, rising from his seat, cry'd, Though all Judea feels the burthen which the man before us has laid on every shoulder, and the whole world too well knows that he has impiously rebell'd against the Great

Jehovah, who has display'd his terrors on Mount Moriah! that he has rebell'd against the priests of the Most High God; and against the great Cæsar: though not Caiaphas alone, but all Judea, demand that sentence should be pass'd against him, and that death should strike the blow, yet will we examine witnesses, and hear his defence. 'Tis true, Israel is not now assembl'd, and most of the witnesses are involv'd in the shades of night —O ye devout people who now sleep, soon will ye awake to purer festivals than those in which the Traitor join'd!—for among the few who are here, witnesses will not be wanting. Let him who works righteousness, and loves his country, stand forth, and declare the truth.

Thus spake the high priest. Then came forth witnesses false and corrupt. They had receiv'd the hire of iniquity, and Philo, with most industrious care and superior zeal, had busily employ'd himself in filling their narrow grovelling minds with calumny, and the basest malice. One with an inflam'd look, leering on the Messiah, cry'd:

How he profan'd the temple we all know: but in no instance did he violate that sacred place with greater impiety, than when he drove away those worthy persons, the dealers in offerings. We were assembled to pray, when coming with fury, he turn'd the sellers of the beasts for the sacrifices, out of the holy portico. What veneration can he have for the Eternal, who was guilty of such violence in his temple, as to drive away the offerings by which God is honour'd?

After him appear'd another, who with equal folly and malice misrepresented the divine zeal of the blessed Jesus: falsely adding, that he would have taken possession of the temple, and from thence have fallen on Jerusalem; but that his followers, who, with repeated shouts, had in the wilderness hail'd him King, here prov'd false, and oblig'd him to fly.

Then arose a Levite, who with a contemptuous air, cry'd, Has he not blasphem'd the Most High by his enormous pride, in pretending that he had the power to

forgive sins? On the holy Sabbath, he conniv'd at his disciples, when they, regardless of the sacred day, pluck'd ears of the standing corn! On the holy Sabbath too he restor'd the wither'd hand! and yet this profane offender, who thus breaks the commandments deliver'd by the Most High to Moses on mount Sinai, pretends to forgive sins.

Now spoke the fourth. With a contemptuous smile he arose, and in the voice of ridicule, said, I too must give witness: but what need is there, O fathers, of witnesses against one who, giddy with his vain enterprises, builds on the most romantic dreams? He has said, and people no wiser than himself star'd and wonder'd—He has said, I say, that he would destroy the temple, and within three days a new one should arise from the dust, built by himself. This, before me, he presum'd to utter.

A man whose hair was whiten'd by time, then disgrac'd his hoary locks by his puerile sentiments. This sinner, said he, keeps company with publicans. I myself was one of that number, and maintain, that from them he has learnt to despise Moses, and to heal diseases on the Sabbath.

Thus they witness'd, while looks of expectation were darted on all sides on Jesus, each impatient to hear his defence. So around the dying Christian, whose mind is fill'd with rapturous hopes and dawning joys, stands a crowd of base mockers whispering, The animating dream of immortal life will, like himself, soon disappear. Yet still he enjoys the reviving prospect of endless bliss; prays for himself and for them, and smiles at the grave. Thus the expecting crowd gaz'd on Jesus. But silent was the Prince of Peace. On which Caiaphas, prompted by impetuous rage, cry'd:

Thou sinner, hear'st thou in silence what these witness against thee? But the Messiah still continu'd to hold his peace; on which the haughty pontiff, still more exasperated, raising his voice, cry'd, Speak; I conjure thee by the living God, to answer, whether thou be Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father? Jesus reply'd,

Thou hast said it. Caiaphas now stood erect: his eyes flaming destruction. Satan join'd in the same look, while Abaddon, the angel of death, who attended Philo, thus indulg'd his rapid thoughts:

Were he to esteem these murderers worthy of an answer, it would be that of mercy. But the anger of the Most High is kindled, and the wicked and impenitent will be reserv'd for judgment. The last day will at length arrive. Thou great and terrible day of the Lord, wilt arise in all thy dreadful lustre; then will I salute thee, thou day of retribution, as the fairest of all the sons of Eternity; for then the balance of Justice shall be held forth, and every man be judg'd according to his works. I will hail thee, O festive day! when the righteous shall triumph, and with palms in their hands shall encompass the now persecuted and insulted Messiah; while these earth-born rebels against the Eternal will be involv'd in woe, and cast from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power. I will therefore veil myself, and be silent: but my silence is death! my ceasing to speak, the message of the Avenger!

In an instant these thoughts pass'd through the angel's mind. He then fix'd his eyes on Caiaphas, who had condemn'd the Messiah before he spake. Meanwhile the Saviour lift up his eyes to Heaven, and then fixing them on the high-priest's face, cry'd, I say unto thee, hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven.

Thus shall Jesus open the last day, when he shall come in tremendous glory, descending amidst the songs of angels, and their sounding harps. Here the Saviour open'd a sudden view of futurity, and with no less rapidity, from the amaz'd eye, clos'd the tremendous scene.

Caiaphas now, impell'd by a torrent of rage, observ'd no measures, but stepping forth impetuous, with death lowring on his brow, rent his garment, and, rolling his fiery eyes, call'd out to the mute assembly, Speak, ye have heard his blasphemies! What need have we of farther witnesses? You have heard what he says. Speak;

What think ye? Then all cry'd out, Let him die! Let him die!—Yes, let him die! rejoin'd Philo, swelling with rage; I must give vent to the fulness of my heart: Let him die the accursed death of the cross! a hard and lingering death! Let his mouldering bones receive no sepulture, and no rising turf, enamell'd with flowers, spread over him! Let his corpse putrefy in the parching sun! and on the day when God shall call forth the dead, may he continue deaf, and not hear the voice divine.

Thus spake the man who was now ripe for death. Incited by him, the multitude in wild confusion, rush'd on the holy Jesus.—

O sacred muse of Sion's hill! lend me the veil with which thou coverest thy face, when singing thy orisons before the Eternal; that I, like the blessed spirits on high, with humble reverence, may cover mine eyes, adoring. Gabriel and Eloa, now standing apart and unseen, thus discours'd:

O Eloa, how deep are the mysteries of the Most High! How inscrutable are his ways! Nothing have I seen that equals the deep humiliation of the Son—of him who shone with such resplendent glory!—of him who on high subdu'd the rebel host!—of him whom the bodies of the dead, shaken by his creating voice, shall, at his call, awake, and the earth suffer, as in the throws of childbirth, when he, attended by the loud resounding trump, the angels of death, and the falling stars, shall come to judgment.

Behold, cry'd Eloa, at the formation of this terrestrial globe, he spake, and the light diffus'd abroad its enlivening rays. Thou, O Gabriel! sawest it beam forth. He proceeded, fill'd a thousand times a thousand ideas! a storm, replete with animating life, rush'd before him; and a thousand times a thousand living beings assembled on his right hand. At his command the sun, glowing with invigorating and reviving light, turn'd on its centre. Then arose the harmony of the spheres! then he created the visible heavens!

Behold, at his command, reply'd Gabriel, eternal

night fled and skulk'd at a distance from the wide creation! Eloa, thou wast by when he stood over the dark abyss: when at his call appear'd an enormous mass inert and deform'd: it spread before him like broken suns, or the ruins of an hundred worlds. He bid it glow, and then through the regions of death arose the blue sulphureous blaze! Then was torture known: then did the yells of anguish reverberate through the deep profound.

Thus discours'd these great celestial spirits. Meanwhile Portia, unable longer to bear the insults offer'd to the divine Jesus, went up to the top of the palace: where, having for some time silently indulg'd her tears, she lift up her watry eyes, and her fair hands towards the lowring sky, and thus gave vent to the painful sensations of her disorder'd mind: O thou First of Beings, who createdst the world from chaos, and gavest to man a heart form'd to feel the mild sensations of humanity! whatever be thy name, God! Jupiter! or Jehovah! the God of Romulus, or of Abraham!—O thou Father and Judge of all, may I presume to pour out my lamentations before thee?—May I to thee pour out my complaints? What offence has this peaceable, this righteous man committed, that he should be inhumanly put to death? Dost thou, with delight look down from high Olympus, on suffering virtue? To man indeed it affords an awful admiration, a wonder mix'd with terror: but canst thou who hast form'd the stars, be fill'd with wonder? No—in thee amazement has no place! More sublime are the sensations of the God of gods! Surely thy divine eyes cannot, without pity, behold the guiltless suffer! nor wilt thou fail to reward him, who, thus calmly resign'd, offers up himself a sacrifice to virtue, and to thee! as for me, compassion flows down my cheeks. But thou, where there is no trembling tear, canst discern the hidden anguish of suffering virtue. O thou Father of gods and men, reward, and behold, if possible, this righteous man with admiration!

As she now stoop'd over the balustrade that encompass'd the flat roof of the palace, she heard below, mourn-

ful accents, that seem'd to proceed from a person in despair. These sounds of grief were utter'd by Peter. John, who had continu'd standing at the door, hearing Peter's groans, and the plaintive broken accents that burst from him, with tender pity cry'd, Ah! Peter, is he yet living? Thou weep'st!—thou art silent!—John! return'd Peter, leave me—leave me to die alone!—I cannot survive my guilt! Our gracious Master is lost! But more lost am I!—O Judas! Judas! thou execrable disciple, hast betray'd him!—I too have been false; before all who have ask'd me, I, miserable that I am, have deny'd him! Curse me, John, then go, and leave me to die in silence. Do thou—do thou also die—Jesus is sentenc'd to suffer death; and I, like a base, a pusillanimous, a dastardly wretch, have publicly, before sinners, deny'd him!

Thus Peter, in the agony of his grief, confess'd his guilt to John; who, struck with surprise and concern, continu'd silent. The repentant disciple then hasted from him, and stood in the dark, by the dew-besprinkled corner stone of that spacious building, against which faintly leaning, he sunk down, and declining upon it his drooping head, long wept in silence. But at last, in broken sentences, thus express'd the emotions of his agitated mind. O Death! let thy hideous form now forever cease to affright me!—Turn, O Jesus! turn away that tender, that killing look!——Ah! I ungrateful! have committed the foulest, the blackest deed! I, like a base coward, have deny'd thee, my Friend! my gracious Master!—thee whom I lov'd—thee who lovedst me with an affection superior to that of the kindest friend!—thee whose godlike virtues, whose benevolence, whose piety, more than thy miracles, render thee all divine! O my grovelling timorous soul, what hast thou done?—In the great day of retribution, my dear Lord will disown me!—disown me before his faithful disciples, and all the holy angels!—This—this I deserve! Yet, O Jesus, whom I still love! compassionate my anguish, and let me not hear the dreadful words, depart from me, I know thee not!—O horrid—horrid thought! Alas! alas! what have

I done? The more I think of my crime, the more sensible I am of my guilt, and the deeper I feel its envenom'd sting! Thus with conscious shame, and deep remorse, shall I languish out my wretched life, and lingering die!

Here he ceas'd, and silent indulg'd his tears. Near him stood Orion, his guardian angel, who with soft pity, and seraphic joy, observ'd his penitential sorrow. Peter now falling on his bended knees, cast up his tearful eyes towards Heaven, and, in a low voice cry'd, Thou awful Judge supreme, the Father of men and angels, and of my Lord, thy blessed Son! Oh pity—pity my distress! Thou know'st the anguish of this contrite heart, the keen sensations of my troubled soul! I have deny'd—basely deny'd Jesus, my Lord! my gracious Master! and my Friend! Yet extend thy mercy to me, ungrateful! Forgive, forgive this soul, so dastardly, and so vile. He will die! Unworthy am I to die with my dear Lord—But before he bows his head to the grave—before he gives his last blessing to his faithful disciples, may I once more see him cast a gracious look on me, and may his dying eyes cheer me with forgiveness! To thee, O Jesus! would I then sue for pardon, and not for a blessing. I would entreat thee to let me hear from thy lips that thou forgivest me: for my guilt will not permit me to say, My Lord, hast thou but one blessing, and that confin'd to these thy righteous, thy faithful disciples!—Then if by my tears, my humble sorrow, my deep contrition, I prevail on thee to let me hear that I have obtain'd forgiveness, I will go, and before the whole world acknowledge thee as my Lord.—While it is thy will, O my adorable Creator, that I should live among men, it shall be my sweetest employment to seek out the good, the pious, the pure of heart, to whom, with incessant grief and tears, will I say, Yes, I knew Jesus, the most holy, the dearest, the best of men, the Son of the Most High God! Yet was I unworthy to know him!—I was one of his chosen disciples!—He lov'd us all—he lov'd me!—yet I, unworthy, did not return his love! In the hour of his

distress, my courage fail'd, and I no longer lov'd the most holy of men, the best, the most divine! His kind, his generous heart overflow'd with benevolence; he liv'd for others, and not to himself. He fed the poor: he heal'd the sick: he rais'd the dead to life. Hence he was hated!—hence he was murder'd by wretches dead to humanity! I will teach you the words of wisdom that fell from his gracious lips. But first, arise, ye men, and come away; let us go to his grave, and weep!—Ah! his grave! how dreadful the thought!—O Jesus! thou divine Jesus! Where will be thy grave?—Ah, where wilt thou rest in peace?—Where will the rage of the cruel leave thee a grave?

Thus with deep anguish, and humble fervour, Peter deplor'd his ingratitude to him, whom the sinners of the earth, in their words acknowledge, and in their actions deny: but he wept, and obtain'd the martyr's crown.

THE

MESSIAH.

BOOK VII.

The Argument.

Eloa welcomes the returning morn with an hymn. The Messiah is led to Pilate, and accused by Caiaphas and Philo. The dreadful despair, and death of Judas. Mary comes, sees her divine Son standing before the Roman governor, and fill'd with grief, applies to Portia, who comforts her, and tells her dream. The Messiah is sent to Herod, who expecting to see him work a miracle, is disappointed: when Caiaphas observing his dissatisfaction, accuses Jesus, who, after being treated with derision, is sent back to Pilate. That governor endeavours to save him; but is prevailed on to release Barabbas, and condemn Jesus. He is scourged, arrayed in a purple robe, and crowned with thorns, and in this condition Pilate shews him to the people to excite their compassion, but finding all in vain, he delivers him to the priests, who cause him to be led to crucifixion.

THE

MESSIAH.

BOOK VII.

ELOA now stood amidst the purple blushes of the opening morn, encompass'd by the guardians of the earth, and in slow and solemn strains join'd his lyre to his melodious voice.

To thee, Eternity, is born this awful day—this day of blood; which rises in the Heavens replete with mercy, and with grace divine. Hail, all gracious Father!—hail! —who gavest thy Son to die for man, and who, from blackest human guilt, brings forth smiling peace and immortality. Hail, Saviour, meek and holy! This day shall shew thy love to man, while all the wondering host above, enraptur'd shall admire thy condescension, and extol thine high philanthropy and grace. Ye cherubim and seraphim, tune your golden lyres, and chant his praise, who now will bleed and die, that man may live. Thou now shalt bruise the serpent's head, and break the sting of death. From the earth shall angels arise; and quitting their mortal clay, appear in radiant forms; while eternal Rest shall close the train of thine exalted triumphs. Behold that hill of mouldering earth, the altar on which the blessed Saviour will be sacrific'd by sinners. It trembles at the approach of the mighty victim, and had the great Eternal pil'd up stars, as stones from the purling brook, to form an altar for his gracious, his godlike Son, the enormous mass would have trembled at his approach.

Hail blessed day, replete with mercy, and with grace

divine! Behold the sun now begins to smile with more refulgent lustre on this earthly globe. See how his slanting rays skim along the nether sky! Hail day of sacred rest, and solemn joy in Heaven, in which the seraphs lay their crowns before the eternal throne adoring. Let all the wide creation join to praise the suffering Jesus, and suns and worlds innumerable admire and celebrate his mercy, and his love divine.

Thus sang Eloa, while his sacred hymn resounded through the heavens. On this earth, mortals blinded and harden'd by sin, had very different thoughts—thoughts like those of Satan. Eternal Providence permitted the transgressors to fill up the measure of their iniquities. Now had the high-priest assembled his creatures in the inner hall, where sitting in council, they conspir'd against the holy Jesus. There, in deep consultation, they debated on the methods by which they might bring over Pilate to join their bloody purpose: on the measures to be taken with the multitude; and on the manner in which the Saviour should die. But the proud Philo despising them too much to pay the least regard to their advice, abruptly left the assembly, and sought the Messiah, whom he found sitting with the guard at the declining fire. Before him, with menacing port, he, with quick step, walk'd to and fro: till, at length, his threatening eye, gleaming with revengeful fury, became fix'd on Jesus. He then stood still: but amidst all the ebulitions of rage, with fluttering anxiety foresaw a train of difficulties that oppos'd his design: these he provided against, by placing before his mind every expedient which eloquence, the authority of the priests, or any external object might afford; leaving nothing to chance. At length, recollecting that Jesus might be rescu'd by the furious populace, his heart began to fail; but checking his fears, and summoning all his courage, he resolv'd to put him to death, or to perish in the attempt. Then considering that the time for executing his fell purpose was now arriv'd, his heart again flutter'd; but he soon suppress'd all the tumult within, and now full of his resolu-

tions, the slight airy web prepar'd by vain precaution, he return'd to the council; where he instantly cry'd, with a loud voice, Still, fathers, do you delay! Does not the dawn already appear?—Shall he yet live till the evening?

Roux'd at Philo's words, the council suddenly broke up; and the guard rudely laying their hands on the blessed Jesus, they, with a formidable body of the priests, scribes, and elders, led him to Pilate. Cold was the breath of the morning; and the glimmering light of the rising day now unveil'd to Jesus the temple, which was only for a few hours to prefigure a nobler sacrifice, than was ever offer'd on the smoking altars. From that structure he turn'd his eyes to Heaven. He was hurry'd along, and early as it was, was soon attended by a numerous multitude: for report had not conceal'd the transactions of the night. Messengers were dispatch'd to inform Pilate of their coming, and they had scarcely arriv'd, when that governor, to his great surprise, beheld all the tribe of Juda appear before him, only to bring a dubious charge against a single man. Having press'd up the ample stair-case which led to the judgment hall, they stopp'd in an open gallery before it, call'd Gabbatha, where Pilate had caus'd his seat to be plac'd: for the approaching festival did not permit their entering the court of justice. There, in superb state, sat Pilate on the seat of judgment, who immediately cry'd, Of what does the elders of Israel accuse the prisoner? and—How! added he, interrupting himself, do I see Caiaphas himself here? This he spake aloud, with his eyes fix'd more on Jesus than on the assembly. The high-priest then advancing nearer, said, We flatter ourselves that Pilate has such an opinion of the fathers of Israel, as to be persuaded that they would not have brought this man before him, were he not a criminal. Yes, Pilate, he is a criminal, and his crime greater than has ever been committed since Israel has enjoy'd the happiness of being under thy government. With such indignation has his guilt fill'd the fathers of Judea, that they are unable to represent before thee, in a clear light, the impious opposition this Jesus

has made against the laws of our prophet, and the holy temple! or how the sorcerer, by his fascinating speeches, and a thousand miracles, has seduc'd the people! Long, very long, O Pilate! has he deserv'd death.—

Here Pilate interrupting him, cry'd, Then take him, and judge him according to your law. Why, O Roman! resum'd the high-priest, dost thou mock us? Thou canst not but know, that it is not lawful for us to put any man to death. Here he paus'd, vex'd that Pilate should oblige them to recollect their lost freedom; but soon continu'd, Thou know'st what submission, what unreserv'd obedience and unshaken fidelity we have shewn to Tiberius, our sovereign, and the father of his country. This Jesus, whom thou seest before thee, has assembled the people in the wilderness of Judea, where, by his factious speeches, he has incited them to shake off their subjection to Cæsar, and to make him king. He pretended to be the person foretold by the prophets as the deliverer of Judah. He search'd into their inmost thoughts, learnt their sentiments, sympathiz'd in their concerns, and, when they were hungry in the desart, supply'd them with food. How greatly he has by these means attach'd them to himself, appears from the manner in which he made his public entry into Jerusalem—But I shall not attempt to describe the pomp and rejoicings of that profane day. Thou thyself must have observ'd them, and have heard the rude acclamations, the hosannas, the frantic exultations of the mad'ning populace, which doubtless shook even this solid edifice.

At this Pilate only smil'd; on which Philo repressing the heat of his malice, and all the fury of ungovern'd rage, calmly began, Could I, O thou wise Roman, imagine that thou wouldst suffer thyself to be so deceiv'd by a specious shew of humility, as to believe the proud traitor incapable of forming ambitious schemes of rebellion, I should now continue silent. But thou know'st mankind.—This Jesus, however contemptible he may seem, while bound and a prisoner, made a very different appearance in the desarts of Galilee. I beg, O Pilate!

thy patient hearing, while I lay before thee a slight sketch of his projects. First, by the arts already mention'd by the high-priest, he practis'd on the infatuated multitude. He then proceeded to try how far he could govern them. But how did the trial answer his presumptuous attempt? Confident discourses, eloquence sublime, now indeed lying dormant, and fictitious miracles, gave him success. His projects ripening apace, he mov'd the multitude to make him king. They flock'd about him, and the air resounded with their applause. This he perceiv'd, and the more to inflame their zeal, withdrew from their sight. This succeeded. They went in quest of him, and the rolling stream was swell'd by the accession of new currents. At length finding their strength equal to the end propos'd, he no longer avoided them; but enter'd Jerusalem in triumph. Yet, however great was the attachment of the multitude to him, it went not so far as to induce them to compel the fathers of Jerusalem to go out and meet their king. And be assur'd, O Pilate! that had they dar'd to make the attempt, there is not a hoary head among all those thou seest before thee, nor any of us who serve at the altar, who would not with joy have bled in the cause of God, and of Cæsar.

Pensive stood the Messiah. Over him hover'd sufferings, the price of the great redemption. Death in its most horrid form summon'd him to the altar, while those who rag'd around him were only the sacrificers, and these he scarce observ'd. Thus the commander, chosen by his native country to chastise an insolent invader, and to revenge the indignant tears of expiring liberty, looks not at the dust that rises from the ensanguin'd plain. But Pilate, though a Roman, was fill'd with amazement at the silence of the Mediator. Thou hear'st, said he, the heavy charge that is brought against thee, and yet art silent—Perhaps thou art unwilling to defend thyself before this tumultuous assembly. Follow me. Jesus then followed the Roman governor into the judgment hall.

Now uncertainty, with staggering feet, walk'd among the priests, spreading over their faces pallid fear.

But a more abandon'd sinner than they; one who, with guilt of deeper dye, had ungratefully betray'd his divine friend, seeing the approach of that death, to which he found the impatient priests were resolv'd to lead him, suddenly started up, and hastily rush'd out of the assembly, then pressing through the waving multitude, flew to the temple, where Caiaphas, dreading an insurrection, had posted a number of priests. This the traitor knew, and now had enter'd the sacred structure, where reign'd an awful silence. At the sight of the veil, hanging before the Holy of Holies, he hastily turn'd aside; he was seiz'd with a sudden tremor; paleness sat on his cheek, guilt and horror on his brow. Then going with frantic gesture up to the priests, he cry'd aloud, Take back your silver. I have sinn'd in betraying the blood of the innocent, which, wretch that I am! now falls on my head! He then threw the money at their feet, and rolling his eyes, in wild despair, rush'd out of the temple, and out of Jerusalem, flying from the sight of man. He stops, and looks around. He runs. Again he stands still. Again he flies. Then hastily casts his eyes about to see whether he be observ'd by mortal eye. At length no human being appears in sight, and the noise of the city dies on his ear.

Judas then clenching his hands, and stamping, cry'd, Oh, how my guilt stares me in the face, and tears this obdurate, this black, this cruel heart! I cannot—I must not bear it! This nameless agony will not—no, it will not, after death, be more dreadful! O horror, most horrible! O rage——rage, too long am I in thy power! When these eyes are clos'd—these ears are deaf—I shall not see him stretch'd on the cross!—I shall not see his trickling blood! nor hear his faltering voice!—But he who spoke on Horeb said, Thou shalt do no murder!—He did—But I have no God!—Thou, Misery, shalt be my God! Thou commandest me to die!—I will obey—I will die!—Ah! why do I tremble? why feel this inward

conflict? Why, O my soul! dost thou shudder at the dreadful deed? Ah traitor! does the love of life still rise? Wouldst thou live—live branded as the most treacherous—most ungrateful—most accurs'd?—Have I not betray'd—aye, murder'd the holy Jesus—once my friend? for this the Grave opens wide its gaping jaws—and Hell!—Oh horror—horror inexpressible!——Sure Hell cannot be worse!—I'll know the worst. Die!—wretch, die!—kill also the soul, which would carry its wretchedness beyond the grave.—Thought, thou art my torment—my curse!—I would kill thought!—Thou thinking principle, so wretched, and that yet shudders at this dread deed of black despair, to thee I wish destruction! Thus, with wandering look he spake, and then with fury curs'd, and rag'd against the Eternal.

Ithuriel, and Obaddon, the angel of death, had follow'd his steps. Iscariot now stood silent under a spreading tree, and, by each gesture, shew'd that he was devoting himself to destruction. Then Ithuriel, with precipitate voice, said to Obaddon, Behold, he is going to die by his own hand! I who have been his angel, was willing once more to see him. Now the sinner is left to thee, and to the dread effects of his rash despair. Though once his guardian, I now deliver him up to thee. He sacrifices himself; lead him to death everlasting. Thou know'st the divine command. I veil myself, and fly from the scene of horror. Then Obaddon, rising to the summit of an adjacent hill, stretch'd towards Heaven his right hand, in which he held a flaming sword, and utter'd the solemn, the dreadful words pronounc'd by the angels of death, when man filling up the measure of his guilt, impiously deserts the post allotted him by the great Creator, and flying in the face of sovereign mercy, which ever smiles on true repentance, murders himself.

O Death! I conjure thee, by the awful name of the great Omnipotent, to make this man thy prey! His blood be upon himself. Behold thou, to thee, extinguishest the sun. Life and Death lie before thee: but thou, wretched mortal, shortenest the time appointed thee by sovereign

wisdom, and chooseſt death. Withdraw thy light, O Sun! and on him come the agonies of expiring nature! O Grave, open wide thy tremendous jaws! and ſeize him, O Corruption! His blood be upon himſelf.

Judas heard the voice of the immortal ſpirit. Thus, at midnight, the wandering traveller, in a lonely forest, liſtens to the diſtant ſtorm which howls in the mountains, and tears up the cloud-top'd cedars on their lofty ſummits. Iſcariot, fill'd with all the frenzy of deſpair, anſwer'd, Too well I know thy voice: thou art Jeſus, who is now put to death, and followeſt me, requiring thy blood, which I, ungrateful, have ſpilt! Here I am! ——I come!—I come!—Take my life in return. Thus crying, with look wild and furious, he leapt from the crag of a ſhelving rock, and was ſuſpended in the air. Obaddon himſelf was aſtoniſh'd, and ſtarted back.—He dies.—The amaz'd ſtruggling ſoul, ere the breaking of his convuls'd heart, thrice ſhook his whole frame; and at the fourth, the ſtretching cord, by which he hung, broke: he fell on the craggy rock, and Death drove his frantic ſpirit from its earthly manſion. It aroſe upwards. Volatile ſpirits follow'd from the ſqualid corpſe, and, ſwifter than thought, gather'd round it, and became an aërial body, that, with clearer eyes, the ſoul might behold the dreadful abyſs, and, with finer and more terrify'd ear, diſtinguiſh the thunders of the awful Judge rolling on high: but it was a body odious to the ſight of man, weak, and only ſenſible of pain. Soon had the ſoul recover'd from the ſtupor of death. It began to think, and ſaid, Am I again ſenſible?——What am I now?—How light I raiſe myſelf on high in the air! Are theſe bones? —No, they are not—but yet I have a body!—How myſterious!—Who am I?—But—dreadful are my perceptions!—I feel myſelf miſerable!—Am I Judas, who dy'd by his own hand?—Where am I?—Who is he on the hill—that bright figure, who caſts a dreadful look towards me?—Oh that my eyes had remain'd cloſ'd in darkneſs!—but they ſee more clearly!—more clearly ſtill!—ah, how dreadfully clear!—Away, Judas, begone!

—O horror! horror! it is the Judge of the earth!—I cannot escape!—and that is my frightful corpse! O that I could enter it again!

Now the guilty spirit, amaz'd and confounded, sunk to the ground. Arise, call'd Obaddon from the hill, sink not down to the earth. I am not the Judge of the world; but Obaddon, the angel of death, one of his messengers. Hear thy sentence. This is the first, and worse is that which will follow.

To death everlasting art thou adjudg'd! Thou hast betray'd thy Lord, the gracious Messiah! Thou hast rebell'd against the omnipotent Jehovah! and hast murder'd thyself! Therefore he who holds the scales in his right hand, and in his left, death, hath said, The terrors that shall gather round the head of the traitor are beyond measure; beyond the reach of numbers. First shew him the bleeding Redeemer, fix'd on the cross. Then at a distance let him see the bright mansions of everlasting felicity, and then convey him to the gloomy regions of eternal night!

Thus the angel announc'd the sentence. On which the trembling ghost, now render'd by its terrors still blacker and more horrible, at a distance follow'd Obaddon.

In the meantime Jesus was in the judgment hall with Pilate, who said, Art thou the King of the Jews? The Saviour looking on the Roman with a placid gravity, answer'd, If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight: but my kingdom is not on earth. How then, return'd Pilate, canst thou be a king? I am, said Jesus. I came down to earth, and was born to lead mankind to the truth. They that are of the truth, listen to my voice.

Here Pilate chang'd the discourse, and with the air of a politician, willing to elude the decision of an affair which he thinks beneath his farther enquiry, said with a smile, What is truth? Then return'd with Jesus to the multitude, and addressing himself to the priests, said, I cannot find that he is guilty of any crime; much less that he is wor-

thy of death. It does not appear to me, that he has really engag'd in any seditious practices: but as ye have mention'd Galilee as the principal scene of his rebellion, I will send him to Herod, who is now in Jerusalem, and let him, if he pleases, punish him. The affair seems to relate to something in your law, of which Herod is a better judge than I.

After a sleepless night, the mother of the most amiable of the sons of men, came to Jerusalem with the first appearance of the dawn, and hasted to the temple in search of the divine Jesus; but not finding him, stood depress'd by anxiety and grief, till a hoarse murmur from the governor's palace reach'd her ears. She then mov'd towards the sound, without any idea of the cause from which it arose, and mingled with the crowds which from every part of Jerusalem were flocking to the judgment seat. Melancholy, but entirely at ease with respect to the cause of the tumult, she drew near to the solemn place, when she observ'd Lebbeus, who no sooner met her eye, than he hastily withdrew. Ah, cry'd she to herself, he shuns me! Why does he turn aside? This thought drew the sword which the divine providence had ordain'd should pierce through her soul. Mary then entering the place call'd Gabbatha, and raising her head, saw Jesus. Her angel, on beholding the paleness of death overspread her face, and the tender anguish that appear'd in her eyes, turn'd aside. Yet she, though her sight grew dim, and her ears seem'd stunn'd, went forward, and, trembling, proceeded towards the judgment seat, where she at once saw her son, his powerful accusers, with the Roman governor sitting in judgment, and heard the voices of the multitude clamorously demanding his death. What could she do? To whose mercy could she have recourse? She look'd around and saw no pity. She rais'd her eyes to Heaven, but from thence receiv'd no relief. In this extremity, her bleeding heart in silent fervour thus offer'd up its petitions to Him who perfectly knows every idea of the human mind.

O thou who causedst the miraculous birth of this my

dear Son to be made known to me by an angel, before I had, by thy power, conceiv'd: who in Bethlehem's vale gave him to me, that I might rejoice with a mother's joy, in concert with those with whom never mother rejoic'd: with a joy which the angelic hosts themselves in their hymns at his birth, did not fully express: oh let me not see the wicked prevail against him. Thou who didst graciously lend an ear to the supplications of the mother of Samuel, when at thine altars she mingled her petitions with her tears, hear my sighs, and pity the distress of my soul. O God most merciful! consider the anguish of my heart, which is greater than what I felt for him from the pains of childbirth. Thou gavest me the tenderness of a mother; thou gavest me the best of Sons—Of all human beings the best. O thou who createdst the Heavens, and hast directed the sons and daughters of affliction to fly to thee for relief, if my petition be agreeable to thy divine will, suffer not these cruel men to put to death my Son, the holy Jesus.

Here her affliction grew too great to permit her even to give vent to her thoughts. Meanwhile the stream of the impetuous multitude drove her aside out of his view. With much difficulty she now made way through the crowd: she stood still: then press'd forward, seeking for his disciples; but not finding them, she veil'd herself, and freely indulg'd her tears. At length, lifting up her eyes, she saw herself close by the other side of the Roman palace: then sighing, she said to herself, Perhaps some humane, some tender mind may dwell in this riotous house: perhaps a mother, who is not above sympathizing in a mother's grief. Oh that this were but the case!—Many mothers report of thee, O Portia! that thou hast a benevolent heart.—O ye angels, who at the manger sang the nativity of my Son! may she pity my distress!

Mary instantly ascended the marble steps, took off her veil, and enter'd the empty, silent rooms. Soon she saw a graceful Roman lady issue forth from a distant chamber on the side next the hall of judgment, who, be-

holding Mary, stood surpris'd, while her limbs appear'd to tremble under her loose robe. The mother of Jesus, though her countenance was clouded by grief, in all her gestures shew'd a dignity that was admir'd even by the angels; for true dignity is best understood by the celestial spirits: and now, with a graceful humility, she approach'd the fair Roman, who instantly cry'd, Say—oh say, who art thou? for never have I beheld such dignity—such noble sorrow.

Mary now interrupting her, said, If thou feelest in thine heart the compassion that sits on thy countenance, lead me—oh lead me to the amiable, the humane, the generous Portia. The lovely Roman matron, now still more amaz'd, answer'd, with softest voice, I am Portia. Thou the generous Portia! return'd Mary, fill'd with an agreeable surprise. On seeing thee, a secret wish arose in my mind, that Portia was such as thou appear'st. And art thou indeed that Roman lady?—But thou canst know little of the grief felt by a mother, belonging to a people whom thou hatest; yet the women of Israel extol thy gentleness and humanity. I am the mother of him whom Pilate is now judging, whom cruel men have unjustly accus'd, though he has committed no offence; for he is holy, and his life irreproachable.

Portia stood viewing her with rapturous admiration; while her nobler thoughts raising her mind above the dejections of compassion, she at first seem'd lost in amazement. At length she cry'd, And is he thy Son, and thou the most bless'd of women? Art thou the mother of the divine Jesus? Art thou Mary? Then turning from her, she, with audible voice, thus lift up her thoughts, and her eyes to Heaven.

O ye Gods! she is his mother! I call upon you, ye nobler, ye better Gods, of whom I have heard in a dream—in a dream full of realities, and of high importance. O thou Supreme! Jupiter is not thy name, nor Apollo; but whatever thou art call'd, thou hast sent to me the mother of the greatest, the wisest, the best of men! if indeed he be a man. And is she not become a

supplicant to me?—to me!—oh let her not offer her supplications to me! but rather let her lead me to him—to her exalted Son, that he may deliver me from darkness and doubt! that by casting upon me a distant look, he may unfold the knowledge of the Most High God, and the wonderous mysteries I long to know.

Portia again turn'd herself towards Mary, who, with an affectionate look, met the Roman matron's eye, and then cry'd, How art thou mov'd?—Doth Portia pity me? —Oh then am I happy—then am I indeed a most happy mother! No mother ever lov'd a son with a love like mine. But, O fair Roman! let me conjure thee by thy heart so full of compassion, not to implore thy Gods. It is thou thyself must help my Son; they have no power to help him. Nor canst thou, if the Most High has decreed that he shall die. Yet if Pilate preserves his soul unstain'd with the blood of the innocent, with more confidence will he appear before the judgment seat of God.

Portia earnestly fixing her eyes on Mary, thus, with gentle voice, reply'd: Oh what said I first?——what last? ——I scarcely know what I say, or what emotions swell my heart! First, let this be thy comfort: let this be thy consolation; I will strive to help thee—thee whom my soul loveth. Know too, O Mary! that I do not, as thou supposest, call on those Gods. A holy dream, from which I am but just risen, has taught me better Gods, and to them have I pray'd—A dream, such as hath never before been presented to my imagination—a terrifying, an heavenly vision! I would have help'd thee, Mary, even though thou hadst not come: for the vision that appear'd before me, had already, with a powerful voice, spoke in thy behalf: but the end of it was dreadful, and surpassing my understanding. At my awaking, strong were the impressions it had made upon my mind, and I was hasting to see the mighty prisoner, when behold, the Gods sent me his mother!

Here she beckon'd to a female slave, who stood at a respectful distance in the passage: for on leaving her apartment, she had given orders that a slave should be

sent to attend her. She was now come, and Portia, addressing herself to her, said, Go to Pilate, and let him know from me, that he who is now before him is a divine person, that therefore I entreat him not to condemn the righteous: For this morning it was the will of the Gods, that a vision in his behalf should trouble me while I slept. Then turning to Mary, she added, Cease now, thou tender mother, to dwell on thy sorrows. I will lead thee into my garden: we will walk among the flowers opening to the morning sun; where we shall be free from this alarming noise, and there I will relate to thee my instructive dream.

Portia was now silent, and Mary, unable to express her gratitude and joy, made no reply. They walk'd down into the garden, while the noble pagan was rapt in amazement, and in reflections which had never before employ'd the faculties of her mind. Her angel had infus'd the dream, and from the strong and warm sensations with which she was affected, now awak'd new thoughts, that with the greater certainty and force, he might touch the finest strings of her heart: but at length, rouzing herself from these contemplations, she thus address'd herself to Mary.

Socrates—thou indeed know'st him not; but my mind exults at his very name; for the noblest life that ever man liv'd, he crown'd with a dignity in death, that did honour to such a life. That eminent sage has always been the object of my highest admiration. Him I saw in a dream: for he gave me to know his immortal name. I, Socrates, said he, whom thou admirest, am come to thee from the regions beyond the grave. Cease to place thine admiration on me. The Deity is not what we thought him. I in the shades of rigid wisdom, and thou at the altars, have gone astray. To reveal to thee the wonders of the Most High would exceed my commission. I only lead thee to the first step of the outer court of his temple. Perhaps, in these wonderful days, in which the greatest and most important event is seen on earth, a better and more exalted spirit may come, and

lead thee farther in the way of truth and holiness. But thus much I may declare to thee, and this knowledge thou hast procur'd by thy singular goodness. Socrates no longer suffers from the cruelty of the wicked. There is no Elysium, no infernal judges, no Tartarus. These are only weak and chimerical fictions, the offspring of Ignorance and Error. Another Judge judges beyond the grave, whose wisdom comprehends all knowledge, whose justice is impartial, whose power is boundless, and whose goodness is infinite. Other suns shine than the fabulous luminaries of Elysium; and the felicity of the blest is pure, ineffable, eternal. But all actions are number'd, weigh'd, and measur'd: how then must the highest apparent virtues sink in real value! how is the boasted worth of the hypocrite scatter'd like dust before the whirlwind. The sincere are rewarded: their involuntary errors receive forgiveness. Thus I, on account of the sincerity of my heart, have obtain'd grace, and am happy. On earth I lov'd virtue; here I drink full draughts from its pure celestial spring. O Portia! Portia! how different is the state on the other side the tomb, from what we have imagin'd! Your formidable Rome is no more than a large assemblage of busy ants, and one sympathizing virtuous tear is of more value than a world. Oh deserve to shed such tears! What at present employs the fix'd attention of the celestial spirits, I have not yet perfectly discover'd, and stand adoring, rapt in wonder and surprise. The greatest of mankind, if I may presume to call him a man, suffers more than the sufferings of a mortal, and paying the lowest obedience to the Most High God, perfects all virtue. He suffers for the human race. Behold thine eyes have seen him. Pilate now sits in judgment on thy Redeemer: but should his blood be shed, louder will it cry, than any innocent blood ever spilt.

Here the venerable phantom paus'd, and then crying, Observe! instantly vanish'd. I look'd around me, and, behold, a black cloud soon cover'd all the azure sky with darkness, and descending, hover'd over the graves,

which trembling, open'd. Over one of them the cloud separated, forming a lucid chasm, through which ascended a man stain'd with blood, follow'd by the eyes of multitudes dispers'd on the graves, who look'd upwards, with stretch'd out arms, as if longing to follow him, till he ascended above the clouds, which soon dispers'd. After this I look'd, and behold many bled and dy'd for him, who had ascended on high. The earth drank their blood, and trembled. I saw the sufferers die; nobly did they suffer, and better were they than the men among whom we live. Now arose a tempest: dreadful it march'd along, spreading a thick gloom over all nature. Terrify'd I awoke.—Here she abruptly pans'd. Thus the mind, trembling, starts back from a train of thoughts, on finding that the last verges too near on the awful depths of providence.

Portia continu'd standing, while Mary lifting up her pensive eyes to Heaven, and then casting an affectionate look on the fair virtuous Roman, thus answer'd: What shall I say, O Portia? To me the purport of this amazing vision is not fully known: but how much do I honour thee, O thou favour'd of Heaven! Spirits of an higher order will come, and lead thee into the sanctuary of God. Silent as I am, when with pleasure and admiration I listen to thy discourse, permit me now to say, that he who created the revolving Heavens, with as much ease as these blooming flowers; who has given to the human race a life of labour, of fleeting joys, and transient sorrows, that we may not forget the value of our immortal souls, nor cease to remember that immortality dwells beyond the grave; is but one. He is call'd Jehovah, the Creator, the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords. He was the God of Adam, the first of men; the God of Abraham our father; but the manner in which we worship him, whatever the proud may say, the pious among us acknowledge to be involv'd in obscurity. Yet it was prescrib'd by the Eternal himself, who can and will remove the veil. He is now removing it. Jesus, the great Prophet, the

Worker of mighty miracles, the Messenger of the Most High God, whom with inexpressible joy, reverence, and astonishment, I call my Son, came to remove the veil. That I was to bear him, that his name was to be Jesus, that he was to redeem mankind, were reveal'd to me by a superior, and immortal being, call'd an angel; but though they are created like us, yet the deities of the Greeks, and of the formidable Romans, did they really exist, would be but as mortals, compar'd with these exalted spirits. When I brought forth the wonderful child, though mean was the place, an host of those bright immortal beings celebrated his nativity, with hymns of joy and triumph.

Portia now overcome by her amazement, lift up her join'd hands and her eyes towards Heaven, and sinking down on her knees, pray'd. She strove to pronounce the word Jehovah: but feeling a secret awe, which would not suffer her yet to presume to mention the tremendous name, she arose, and giving Mary a look of sympathetic sorrow, cry'd, He shall not die.

Ah he will!——he will! return'd Mary. Long has this thought clouded my life with grief and melancholy. For he himself, O Portia! hath said it. He is resolv'd to lay down his precious life: this appears to me, and to his pious disciples, most mysterious.——Ah now my wounded heart bleeds afresh! Thy divine vision begins to open upon my mind.—May God—the God of Abraham bless thee!—but oh turn from me thy weeping eyes! —In vain do thy tears, O Portia, speak comfort to my soul!—He is determin'd to die!—to die!

Here her voice fail'd her. They now turn'd aside from each other, and wept in silence; till at length, as the dying saint casts a look at her friend, the amiable, the disconsolate mother, lift up her head, and cast her swimming eyes on Portia, who with answering look of grief and tender sympathy, took her by the hand, and said, O thou best of mothers! thou most honourable among women! I will go with thee—I will mourn with thee at the sepulchre of the dead!

While they thus interchang'd cordial discourse, the high-priest, attended by the multitude, hurry'd the great Messiah to Herod, whose stately palace already rang with the cry, that Pilate was sending Jesus of Galilee, who had perform'd such mighty miracles, to Herod. That prince immediately assembled his courtiers; and being seated, thus address'd them: The great affair shall this day be decided before me. I have carefully attended to the important things of which rumour has not been silent: his healing the sick with a word, and, with a word, his raising the dead. Yet his submitting to be a prisoner, amazes me no less than you. Thus he spake, but utter'd not all his thoughts. His heart was inflated with pride, and exulting in the idea, that his curiosity and vanity would now be gratify'd, he said to himself, The greatest of all our prophets must stoop to appear before me as a criminal. I shall be his judge; and I will order him to perform some miracle. Should he comply, I shall have the pleasure of seeing it, and the honour of its being done at my command; and should he not, still this celebrated prophet, before whom Israel has strew'd palms, and sung hosannas, will plead before me, as his judge.

Herod's indulgence of these vain contemplations was interrupted by the priests, who, with loud and hasty steps, enter'd the hall. The benevolent Jesus was still among the multitude, who press'd around him. Now a thousand persons rush'd forward, endeavouring to see him: then other thousands. They storm'd, they rag'd. Some reproach'd him, and others wept. Some were fill'd with consternation; others curs'd; others bless'd him. The great Messiah walk'd amidst the tumult with silent resignation, rapt in ideas too great for the narrow powers of a mere human mind to conceive. He look'd forward to the state of his pious followers after his decease, when the Comforter should pour raptures into their transported souls, and enlightening their understandings, lead them into all truth. Already were number'd their tears of joy, ere any of them were shed.

Many of these, his faithful friends, were among the multitude, pressing towards him, to obtain his last blessing, while the crowding populace drove them back. Often did they renew their efforts; but they renew'd them in vain. Amidst these were the disciples; Peter, with heavy heart and languid eye, that in silent language spake his grief. Thou John, and thou Lebbeus, were also there, with Nathaniel, and many of the seventy followers of the Lord. Among the crowd were also many of the female friends of Christ; Mary Magdalen, with Mary, the mother of the sons of Zebedee; but not the sister of Lazarus: she lay at the point of death. The first of these fair disciples was unable to repress the ardour of her soul; for seeing by her, one whose eyes the divine Jesus had open'd, fill'd with devout fervour, she cry'd aloud, Oh, if thou still rememberest the hour when he gave thee to behold the glorious light of the sun, and all this blaze of day, help me—oh help me!—convey me through this maddening crowd, that my eyes may once more see my Lord—that I may once more receive his last blessing!—Oh they will kill him!—they, cruel men, will murder my Lord! but in vain were her entreaties, in vain did the grateful man endeavour to assist her. Meanwhile Peter, dispirited by the anguish of his mind, at length desisted from all attempts to advance nearer to his gracious Master: but John ascending an eminence, obtain'd a distant sight of the blessed Saviour; and then, lifting up his eyes to Heaven, gave vent to his full heart in silent prayer. Meanwhile Lebbeus, addressing himself to the other Mary, who, overpower'd with grief, cover'd her face, said, O thou mother of the son of Zebedee! happy parent, look up to Heaven, look up and smile! How great is her grief who bore the spotless, the righteous, the divine Jesus! Wherever I turn my eyes, methinks she appears before me! I feel, I feel her sorrows; I sympathize in the tender, the painful emotions of her melting soul—of her bursting heart! Pity, oh pity me, ye angels of death! shorten her sorrows, and that she

may not see her only Son expire, oh remove her to the world of peace and joy!

At length the future Judge of the World enter'd Herod's palace, and was led before that prince; who, on seeing him, was struck with amazement: amidst all the swellings of pride, he was astonish'd at beholding such dignity, such sedate composure. For some time he sat viewing him with a penetrating look, till his pride suppressing his amazement, he thus spake:

Thou Prophet, the fame of thy miracles has spread over the whole country, and has reach'd even my ears. Yet the voice of Fame, seldom representing things as they really are, generally says too much or too little. Shew me then what I am to think of the miracles she, perhaps, has too sparingly attributed to thee! Not that I doubt of thy having perform'd them: I would only see them perform'd, that I too may admire them. For as thou wert before Abraham, so art thou greater than Moses: greater than all the succeeding prophets. Well does it become thee, therefore, to exalt thyself above them by thy superior miracles. That thou mayst not hesitate in thy choice, I have selected some, all of a sublime nature, and worthy of thee. Yonder rises Moriah; above which thou seest the roof of the temple, and its lofty glittering pinnacles; do thou say, Bow, ye pinnacles, and do homage to the Prophet. Within the temple lie the remains of David: how would that holy king rejoice at the sight of Jerusalem! With what amazement should we be fill'd at seeing him! Call, therefore, O Prophet! to the bones of the king, that he may fly from the dark and lonely tomb, and appear alive among us. But thou art silent. If neither of these please thee, speak to the waters of Jordan, saying, Arise, O Jordan! turn thy limpid stream, and flow round Jerusalem; defend her splendid towers, and then roll back thy waters to Genazareth. Or command Sion to rise nearer to Heaven, or to place its lofty summit on the top of Olivet, that the people may, with amazement, behold its far-

projecting shade. Thus spake Herod, without knowing to whom he directed his discourse. He knew not that both the aspiring mountain, and the proud tyrant of conquer'd nations, when compar'd with the humble, the divine Jesus, were no more than elevated dust.

Herod now once more exclaim'd, What, still silent! The Messiah then beheld him with a look of awful dignity; which he mistaking for contempt, arose full of wrath. When Caiaphas observing his passion, seiz'd the favourable moment, and lecring on the Messiah, with malignant sneer, thus spake:

Thou thyself, great Herod, seest what kind of a prophet he is. Behold, when thou demandest a miracle, he is silent! Can he perform miracles? The vulgar imagine that he can, and we have some weak men among the elders, who are of the same opinion. Can he who, though often admonish'd, has had the insolence to oppose the covenant, and the law of Moses, be sent of God, and endu'd by the great Jehovah with the power of working miracles? But his profanation of the covenant deliver'd on Sinai, when involv'd in smoke, amidst the terrors of God, the summoning tempest, and the sound of the trumpet, while Moses was within the cloud on the trembling mountain, Caiaphas will avenge. But this is not all. He has pretended to be a king, and gathering all Judea around him, has made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The people strew'd his path with the branches of the palm: they spread their apparel on the ground, crying, Hosanna to the son of David, Hosanna to the King of Israel, Hosanna to the Blessed of God—Behold he comes, he comes in the name of the Lord; strew palms; pour forth your hosannas; let hosannas resound through the highest Heavens. Sion echo'd back these seditious acclamations, and the portico on Moriah reverberated the sound. I, therefore, conjure thee by the ashes of the holy David, by the shaken tomb, and the sacred remains of thy father Herod the Great, to punish these impious profanations.

Philo now smil'd on Caiaphas, though he was the ob-

ject of his hatred; while Herod, with bitter mockery, order'd a white robe to be put upon Jesus, like those worn by the Romans when candidates for an office. Pilate, added he, has judg'd rightly, and knowing his high merit, will inaugurate him as king, by adding to his hosannas and his palms, the purple and the crown.

Herod spoke and withdrew. The guards of the prince then put a white garment on the holy Jesus, and having insulted him by their cruel mockery, he was sent back to Pilate. The multitude being now greatly encreas'd, by the vast resort of people who came to celebrate the feast of the passover, Jesus was accompany'd by crowds innumerable, and every part of the city was throng'd by a wild concourse. This Philo undaunted sees, just as a pilot on observing the approaching waves, rejoices in his skill, and in the buoyancy of the supporting flood. Though he knows that the people are still divided, and that many thousands are warmly attach'd to Jesus, he remains unmov'd, while his boundless ambition lifts his proud heart above the clouds. He assembles about him the Pharisees, hastily gives the word, and they as readily disperse themselves among the yielding crowd. Thus from the cup of a mortal foe poison flows, and every drop is death. The Pharisees haste to inflame the multitude, the many-tongu'd orators emulating his rancour, his eloquence, and specious blandishments; each according to his different disposition venting exclamations, reproaches or curses. Thus from different mouths resounded,

Think ye that he has perform'd miracles? Herod has ask'd for a miracle; but he ask'd in vain. Ye saw how mute he stood.—Accursed be he who vilifies our father Abraham! Accursed be he whose whole life has been a profanation of the law!—Behold his accusers are the priests of the Most High God!—Has Jehovah sent to us one whom he abandons? He has abandon'd him—ye see him in bonds.—The Heathens in his trial are too mild, too merciful: They little know what an incendiary he is.—This day require the release of no prisoner: If ye

do, his blind followers will attempt to obtain of the Romans his release: Then may the sin fall on your heads who give them the opportunity!—Men and brethren, ye are the holy people! for you shines the temple! for you the altars blaze! for you the flame of the offerings on the high altar rises up to Heaven! To you the dust of the prophets, to you the holy ashes of Abraham, call for revenge! Come then and revenge the greatest of our fathers. By such exclamations the Pharisees drew thousands to their side. Few stood neuter and suspended in doubt: Yet still some continued virtuous and faithful: These were thinly scatter'd amidst the multitude. Thus when a wild hurricane has laid waste the forests that cover the extended summits of the mountains, still stand a few solitary cedars supporting the agitated clouds.

In the meanwhile Pilate, in order to save Jesus, had caus'd a prisoner, who, before his being apprehended, had been the terror of the country, to be privately brought into the judgment hall, and the priests and people were no sooner return'd, than he was plac'd on an eminence, in the open gallery call'd Gabbatha, and expos'd to their view. His glaring eyes roll'd: he bit his lips, and held his panting breath. Rage, not remorse, bow'd his bushy head; and, shaking his naked nervous arm, he rattled his chains. On the right hand of this fell murderer, Pilate plac'd the divine Redeemer. The assassin view'd him cloth'd in a white robe, when the idea that Jesus, or himself, was to be immediately led to death, struck him like a dart, and with anxious solicitude agitated his big swelling heart.

Now Pilate, pointing to the benevolent Jesus, said, Ye brought this man to me, for seducing the people from their allegiance to Cæsar. I have heard him, but do not find that he is guilty of the charge; neither does Herod. I cannot therefore consent to his death. But as on your festival I am to release unto you a prisoner, I will order him to be scourg'd, and then release him. Here he paus'd, but observing, that with dissatisfy'd looks they continu'd silent, he resum'd. But ye hear not reason—

Tell me, which shall I deliver to you, this Barabbas, a robber and a murderer, or Jesus, whom ye call the king of the Jews?

In the meantime Portia's messenger came to him, and said, The man whom thou judgest is a divine person: Portia therefore entreats thee not to condemn the righteous; for this morning it was the will of the Gods, that, on his behalf, she should suffer many things in a dream. Philo was now alarm'd, especially when his emissaries coming in, let him know that many of the people declared for Jesus. Suddenly were heard from afar the melancholy cries of those who had been deaf, lame, blind, and even dead, calling Jesus the holy, the benevolent, the divine friend of mankind; but the raging murmurs of the nearer crowd stifled the sound of their exclamations and complaints; as the cries of an helpless child, in the midst of a forest, are drown'd by the bellowing storm: or as the wise instructions of the sage, are lost before the repetition of the sounding exploits of the great. Philo was sensible of the danger of having his malevolent views render'd abortive. He knew Pilate's design in placing the murderer with the prophet, in the view of the people: but relying on his popularity, he, with an indignant air, left the Roman, proud of the chains, which, by his oratory, he could throw on the minds of the people, and stepp'd forth, while Pilate, with mingled contempt and anger, observ'd him from the seat of judgment.

Philo made a sign to the people, and they were silent before him: he then with ardent look said, With but few words, ye men of Israel, can I this day address you. Ye know me. I hate the Despiser of Moses. I curse him, who, whatever his soothing lips may pretend, curses Moses by his life. From this disposition; from my zeal for our great prophet, I now come to lay before you felicity and destruction. Choose, ye Israelites, choose whether Barabbas shall be saved, or Jesus. Barabbas, we all know, is a murderer. Pilate also knows it, and did he not aim at inspiring you with a misplac'd com-

passion, he would not have rais'd up him as a competitor for your favour with this Jesus, who would fascinate our minds with the specious semblance of innocence. But I shall not take upon me to penetrate into Pilate's designs. We are a conquer'd people, and it becomes us to be silent. But Philo cannot conceal from you, ye Israelites, that ye stand on the brink of ruin, and, with grief, with anguish of heart I speak it, ye are perhaps inclin'd to choose destruction. Yet the descendants of such great, such holy ancestors, shall not thus sink into perdition. This Jesus—How much should I have to say, were I to lay before you all his crimes! These I expos'd in their black, their true colours, in the assembly of your rulers. Then his life hung upon my voice—then they pronounc'd sentence of death against him, and already ought his blood to have stain'd the sacred stones—But we are not allow'd the power of putting any one to death—This Jesus (I shall only remind you of one out of a thousand of his crimes)—This Man of cruelty knows, that when he had fill'd up the measure of his seditions, the Romans would come and extirpate us all. Thousands stood around him, when he talk'd of the siege of this city, of the sinking state, of the temple of God being levell'd with the dust. So blinded were ye, that ye were fill'd with admiration. But he had no mercy on you. He foresees the miseries of Jerusalem: he knows that he, and he alone, is the cause of her approaching anguish, yet persists in his rebellious practices. He sees the smoke of the burning temple, which sinks on Moria, never more to rise. He sees the altar for burnt offerings thrown down. He beholds the stately Jerusalem weeping! she who sat as a queen among the cities, cover'd with ashes—bereav'd of her children—alas! they lie unbury'd! they lie expos'd, in the eye of day, turning to putrefication! while the young, whom torturing anguish and devouring grief have spar'd, are seiz'd by the furious warrior, and their tender bones dash'd against the ruins of this their native city!—alas! no father sees them!—their fathers dy'd in the field of battle!—No mother weeps

over them!—the mothers had long been consum'd by emaciating grief! All this he sees—he sees void of pity, insensible to mercy!

He had no sooner ended, than the other priests shouted their assent, as a signal to the people. But little want was there of such dreadful, such malignant representations, to raise a tumult in their hearts, which their own vices had already implanted there.

Pilate, who had sat lost in thought, now again cry'd, Which of these two shall I deliver up to you? Immediately Barabbas! was resounded from every side, with such fury, that the angels who encompass'd Jesus, trembling, turn'd aside their faces; and Barabbas! Barabbas! was still the cry. At length Pilate's amazement being suppress'd by his indignation, he cry'd, What then shall I do with Jesus, your king? At this, stamping with fury, they bellow'd out, Crucify him! crucify him! The Roman once more endeavouring to calm their rage, added, But what is his crime? Nothing has he done worthy of death. At this their fury burst out with a more violent flame, which being still blow'd up by the voices of the enrag'd priests, the people, stammering, pale, and grinding their teeth, cry'd, with vengeful looks, Crucify him! crucify him! crucify him! Sion, and the forsaken temple on Moriah resounded with the noise, while their feet fill'd the air with dust.

Pilate seeing that all his endeavours to save Jesus were in vain, contrary to the spirit of a Roman, pass'd sentence upon him whom he had declar'd innocent. Struck with fear, he had before left the judgment seat, but now ascending it again, a slave, by his command, brought him a vessel of Corinthian brass, in which was a silver fountain, when making a sign to the people, they, with a mixture of perplexity and wonder, stood looking at him in silence. Then letting the water run from the fountain, Pilate solemnly wash'd his hands before the multitude. The angel which once in ancient times pass'd over the dwellings in the land of Goshen, sparing those that were sprinkled with the blood of the lamb, now, arm'd

with the terrors of God, hover'd over Judea, to devote the people to utter destruction, and fixing his eyes on the countenance of the divine Messiah, there perceiv'd their rejection, accompany'd with a tear. Then that angel of death began those words of the curse, which proclaim through Heaven the sentence of the Sovereign Judge, when nations are ripe for destruction. His voice seem'd like the sound of earthquakes, the remote harbingers of death. Then he engraved the sentence on an iron tablet, and plac'd it on the Judge's throne.

Pilate, making a sign to the slave to retire, again address'd himself to the multitude, crying, Ye furious and inexorable men, I am innocent of the blood of this just person. See ye to it. Now the angel of Israel, trembling and pale, turn'd aside, and left the people. Then pronouncing sentence on themselves, they cry'd out, His blood be upon us and our children. Pale horror, sepulchral silence, and a cold shivering, follow'd the words; but not remorse.

Now Pilate having order'd the crowd to make way, they open'd to form a passage, and Jesus was taken into the judgment hall, to be scourg'd; while Barabbas, being set at liberty, join'd the multitude. The savage murderer, on finding that he was free from his chains, shook himself, and, leaping, shouted forth his obstreporous joy. He stood still; he was silent: he ran; he again stopp'd: the people trembled, and wherever he came, drove back. Yet Philo gaz'd upon him with pleasure. He too would have gladly accompany'd the Redeemer; but it not being lawful for him at that time to enter the judgment hall, he walk'd before the door, and often stopp'd to listen. With joy would he have seen his sufferings: with joy and triumph would he have heard the voice of his pain.

But, O thou muse of Sion! who from the divine, the suffering Redeemer, didst turn away thy face of grief, sing in mournful strains, the scourge, the reed, the purple mantle, and the crown!

The guard, a brutal band, assembling round him,

rudely stripp'd off his garment. Thus in the parch'd desart, where no refreshing stream gladdens the plain, and dispenses fertility, the furious winds strip off the leaves from a solitary tree, that had oft afforded shelter to the faint and weary traveller. They then drag the Lord of Life, and bind him to a pillar. The blood follows every stroke. The precious blood of the holy, the benevolent Jesus, in crimson streams fall down his back. Thou, Eloa, at the dreadful sight, sunk down, and, with the humiliation of a mortal, lay prostrate in the dust. At length, laying aside the blushing scourge, and loosing him from the pillar, on his shoulders they hang a purple robe; in his hand they put a reed, and press upon his drooping head an encircling crown of thorns, from which the drops of blood fall trickling round. Then bowing with insulting mockery—But the trembling harp drops from my feeble hand, and my faltering voice in vain attempts to sing all the sufferings of the eternal Son.

Pilate seeing the calmness with which the divine, the humble Jesus bore pain and insult, once more endeavour'd to fill the people with the commiseration he himself felt, and, giving a sign to the Redeemer, went out of the judgment hall, follow'd with faint and feeble step by the patient all-gracious Sufferer. The multitude seeing them coming, again press'd forward, till Pilate, having commanded silence, cry'd aloud, Ye men of Israel, I bring him out once more, to inform you that he has done nothing worthy of death. Then Jesus advancing nearer, they had a full view of him in his purple robe and bloody crown. Pilate now stretching out his hand, and looking first on Jesus, and then on them, in a compassionate accent cry'd, Behold the Man! At this instant the great Redeemer gave orders to the angels, which, trembling, hover'd round him: for his divine looks needed not words to express to them their meaning; they instantly read this gracious command, Give to my disciples, and all my faithful followers, internal and celestial consolations, when I on the uplifted cross shall bleed, shall die, and lie among those that sleep in death!

Pilate was still desirous of impressing the minds of the people with sentiments of compassion: but soon they shew'd their insensibility to all the tender feelings of humanity; while the clamours of the cruel priests were a constant prelude to the loud cry of, Crucify him! crucify him! At length, being fill'd with indignation, Pilate hastily answer'd, Take him away then, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him; and then, angrily turning from them, went away.

Caiaphas, now hasting after the Roman, said, O Pilate! we have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God. At hearing the words, the Son of God, Pilate trembled, and taking Jesus back to the judgment hall, with anxious solicitude, cry'd, Tell me whence art thou? Jesus made no answer, at which the governor being offended, said, Speakest thou not to me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify, and power to release thee? Then the Messiah calmly answer'd, No power couldst thou have against me, were it not given thee from above, therefore they that deliver'd me to thee have the greater sin.

Pilate then went back to the assembled people, when reading in his resentful gestures the motives of his return, they cry'd aloud, If thou, O Pilate! releasest this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend——Whosoever maketh himself a king, rebels against Cæsar. The governor, provok'd, and struck with double fear, wanted the resolution to support his dignity; and only answer'd with mockery and a contemptuous sneer, What, shall I crucify your king? On which the chief priests hastily reply'd, We have no king but Cæsar.

Now the multitude surrounded the divine Jesus, and proudly in savage triumph led him to death, while the pusillanimous Roman withdrew into his palace.

THE

MESSIAH.

BOOK VIII.

The Argument.

Eloa comes from the throne of God, and proclaims that now the Redeemer is led to death, on which the angels of the earth form a circle round Mount Calvary, also nam'd Golgotha. Then, having consecrated that hill, he worships the Messiah. Gabriel conducts the souls of the fathers from the sun to the Mount of Olives, and Adam addresses the earth. Satan and Adramelech, hovering in triumph, are put to flight by Eloa. Jesus is nail'd to the cross. The thoughts of Adam. The conversion of one of the malefactors. Uriel places a planet before the sun, and then conducts to the earth the souls of all the future generations of mankind. Eve, seeing them coming, addresses them. Eloa ascends to Heaven. Eve is affected at seeing Mary. Two angels of death fly round the cross. Eve addresses the Saviour, and the souls of the children yet unborn.

THE

MESSIAH.

BOOK VIII.

COME thou who, on Sion's sacred mount, hast oft beheld the most holy of the high celestial choir: thou who from him hast learn'd what the eternal Spirit taught, now sing the dying Saviour, the greatest of the dead. Come, O muse of Sion! divine instructress! come—trembling thyself, lead thy trembling votary—lead me to the awful crucifixion. Fill'd with holy terror, I would see the expiring Redeemer; behold his fix'd eyes, his pallid cheek, his open wounds, his precious blood! ——Ah! he faints, he bleeds, he reclines his drooping head! he bleeds, he faints, his eyes are clos'd in darkness, speechless is he who form'd the tongue, and dead is the Lord of Life!

From the presence of the Almighty Father, Eloa darted down with flight more swift than rays of light, beaming from the bright orb of day: even the immortals could scarce discern his rapid course. In his left hand he held a celestial crown, and in his right a golden trumpet, from which he breath'd heavenly notes, while all the spheres join'd their harmony. Then the exalted seraph sang, in strains mellifluous and sublime:

Rejoice, ye sons of Heaven, rejoice! and all ye celestial spirits, whether seated on the flaming suns, or encompassing the throne of the great Omnipotent, join, with soft commiseration and exalted joy, to celebrate the great Sabbath of redeeming love. Join all ye spirits in wonder and in praise. Rejoice, the hour is come—the

gloomy hour, in which the Lord of Life will die for man. The gracious victim is already on his way. Join all ye heavenly hosts, in rapturous strains, to celebrate his love to man.

His voice spread through the Heavens. The blessed spirits had already anticipated the awful, the joyful sound. Eloa instantly hover'd over Mount Calvary, while the angels of the earth hasten'd round him. He call'd, and about him they form'd a radiant circle, close arrang'd, extending far and wide. Then, leaving the centre of this resplendent ring, he descended on the top of the mount. Thrice, with awful reverence, he bow'd his face to the dust, then standing erect, extended his hands, and cast his eyes down on the Messiah, who, amidst insulting crowds, was slowly moving towards Calvary, groaning under the weight of the ponderous cross. Then Eloa stretch'd out his arms over the mount, crying, Hear, ye Heavens, and rejoice! Thou Hell, give ear and tremble! In the name of the all-gracious Father, whose sovereign goodness laid the plan of mercy; in that of the great, the suffering Redeemer, who, full of benignity and soft compassion, is coming here to bleed and die, and in that of the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, the Comforter, of repentant sinners, by whom they shall be led into all truth, thee, O mount, I consecrate for the death of the Son. Holy, holy, holy is he who was, and is, and is to come!

Thus did Eloa consecrate the mount, while over-powering amazement dimm'd the effulgence of the great immortal, who now seeing the Son of Man near the mount, bending with tottering step, under the galling cross; a heavy burthen for shoulders torn by cruel stripes! he prostrated himself on the parch'd grass, and with folded hands, thus pour'd out his soul.

O thou who drawest near to thy altar, to die the most ignominious, and therefore the most astonishing, the most glorious of all deaths! Thou Friend of Man, Creator, yet Child of Bethlehem, born of a race doom'd to the grave!—Thou weepest, while to thee we sing triumphant

hymns. Thou humblest thyself so low as to suffer on Golgotha. The heavenly host are lost in wonder, while rapt in the contemplation of thy love to man. O Son! —Son of God! the born, the incarnate Messiah! once immortal! the Accomplisher of all that is most amazing, highest, best!—of all that is most glorious! most admirable! most divine! the Restorer of innocence! the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world! the Reviver of the dead! the Destroyer of death everlasting! the Judge of the earth! Hear my lowly supplications, attend to the voice that addresses thee from the dust on which thou art to bleed. O thou Saviour of man, when thine eyes fail, when the paleness of death overspreads thy face, when the Heavens shall trembling pass away, and the sun withdraw his light, then from the overshadowing night, in which thy life departs, strengthen me, O thou great Accomplisher of the redemption of man!—strengthen me, that I, helpless, trembling, and forlorn, may not sink among the sepulchres of the earth —and when in the hovering twilight, the convuls'd creation shall appear to swim before my disorder'd sight, may I see thee expire! O death of the Son, how near dost thou approach! From the first who became mortal, till the last of the race of Adam, the happy influences of thy death, O thou Messiah! shall extend, and all arise at the sound of the last trump. Hail, ye redeem'd, who shall come rejoicing, having wash'd your robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!

Eloa now arose, and around Calvary marshall'd the angels of the earth in wide extended circles. They assembled on low and floating clouds that cover'd the broad summit of the mountain, or hover'd in deep contemplation above the cedars, moving with their waving tops. He himself stood on a pinnacle of the temple. A mighty host encompass'd the mount: these were the dispensers of the providence of the Omnipotent. Here were the angels of death and of judgment, the guardians of mankind, and of the future Christians, who, when they have the care of the martyrs, have the chief

place at his throne, for whom the palm-bearing martyrs die.

Meanwhile Gabriel, whom the divine Sufferer had sent to the sun, alighted at Uriel's residence, and standing before the souls of the parents of mankind, thus address'd them:

Draw near, ye parents of the human race, and behold your Saviour. Here, with his trembling right hand, he directed their sight, and then added: The Redeemer is dragging his cross; near the foot of that hill, the hill of death! On its summit, ye shall behold him bleeding on that torturing cross for you, and for your children!—O ye redeem'd! he goes—he hastens to prepare eternal life for generations yet unborn!

Thus with ecstasy spake the seraph, and then flew towards the earth. Silent, with mingled grief and joy, the human spirits follow: they haste: their celerity can only be surpass'd by the ideas of the devout soul ranging with holy rapture from star to star. Gabriel led the radiant band, and now their gliding feet tread the Mount of Olives, on which Adam alighting first, sunk down, and kiss'd the earth.

O earth! maternal land! said he, do I again behold thee! How many ages are pass'd away, since at my death, or rather at my revival to a noble, a better life, thou receiv'dst my frail cumbrous body into thy peaceful bosom! Never since that awful—happy moment have I trod on thy surface. Thy bosom is now fill'd with the remains of my offspring. I salute thee, O earth! I salute you, ye remains of the dead, my children. Ye shall awake! Yes, my dear children, ye shall awake! The hours approach that shall deliver the earth from the curse brought upon it by my sin, and at length your dust, my children, rising, shall bless the gracious Saviour, who now dies for you and me. Behold the incarnate Messiah, the earth-born Creator comes!—Behold he comes to die—to die for you!

Thus spake the first of men; then silently looking towards Calvary, a heavenly melancholy, a sacred

awe, began to tremble through his whole etherial frame.

On the temple stood Eloa, whence he descry'd the crowd of happy human souls that descended with Gabriel. Then turning his face, he perceiv'd on high over the cross, Satan and Adramelech wheeling about with looks of wild exultation; Satan transported with the work he should soon accomplish, and both pleas'd with the thoughts of future deeds, productive of misery. He sees them above the clouds of the moving earth, with immense circuits, measuring the vast empyreal vault. Eloa, now vested in his full glory, rises from the temple towards the immortal offenders, array'd in all the lustre of this most solemn day, this highest festival, and surrounded by the terrors of the Most High. Before him light breezes became bellowing storms, and his progress was as the march of an army, under whose feet the rocks tremble. The mighty sound, and no less awful effulgence of the celestial spirit, proclaim'd his approach. The apostates saw and heard him coming; they strove, but strove in vain, to conceal their confusion: they stopp'd, and became of still more sable hue. So in the abyss of the lowest Hell stand two rocks, cover'd with the darkest nocturnal gloom. Then with one stroke of his extended wings, the seraph reach'd the spirits accurs'd, and thus, with commanding voice, he spake: Ye whose names are mention'd in the abyss, be gone. Ye see the luminous circle of the pure, the exalted immortals; fly, and free the sacred place from your profane presence. The extent of the most distant radiance of the bless'd shall indicate your limits: within the compass of their beams, presume not either to soar above the clouds, or to creep along the dust of the earth.

Thus the seraph deliver'd his commands. But as when two storms descend in black clouds on two of the mountains of the Alps, the rapid thunder bursts in their bosoms, and rolls through the winding valleys; so the proud infernal spirits prepare to answer Eloa. All the terrors of rage, all the rancour of revenge, gather in the wrinkles

of their brows, and flash from their flaming eyes: but Eloa beholding them with majestic look, and stedfast gaze, check'd the thunder ere it burst, crying, with a commanding voice, Be ye silent—fly—Did I come with that triumphant strength with which I am endu'd by the Omnipotent, my thunder, hurl'd from this uplifted arm, should drive ye beyond the bounds of the wide creation. But I come in the name of the Son of Adam, who there bears his cross; and in the name of that Conqueror of Hell and Death, command you to fly. They fled: but first chang'd blacker than the gloom of midnight, and were pursu'd by terrors, which drove them aside among the ruins of Gomorrah in the Dead Sea. With joy the angels and the souls of the blessed saw their disgraceful flight, while Eloa, array'd in all his glory, descended on one of the pinnacles of the temple.

The holy Jesus was come to the hill of death, when, faint with suffering and fatigue, he sunk under the burthen of the cumberous cross. The blood-thirsty multitude then forc'd a fearful traveller, who had just decended the declivity, to bear the cross. Among those who follow'd, some soft and gentle minds, free from rage, beheld him with compassion, and lamented his fate; yet their hearts, being attach'd to vanity, scarcely did they know whom they pity'd. This sorrow, fleeting and transitory as a morning dream, arose from no generous sensation of the soul. Jesus heard their lamentations, and, turning towards them, said, Why do ye weep, O yé daughters of Jerusalem? Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children: for the day of distress and anguish approaches; the dreadful day, when they shall say, Blessed are the barren! the womb that never bare, and the breast that never gave suck! Then will they say to the mountains, fall on us, and to the hills, cover us. For if this be done to me, what shall be done to the sinner?

Having at length reach'd the summit of the hill, Jesus lifts up his eyes to the Sovereign Judge. Meanwhile the executioners take the cross, and set it up among the bones

of the dead. Now the solemn day shines with fainter light; yet still the smallest of the animal creation sport in the extended fields of vital air. Soon the earth gently trembles thro' its depths profound; whirling storms sweep along its defac'd surface, and howl through its hollow caverns: the cross shakes, and near it stands the Prince of Peace.

Adam on perceiving him, could no longer contain his transports: with glowing cheek, and hair flying back, he ran to the outer slape of the mountain: then sunk to the earth, while the celestial radiance, which beam'd from his immortal eyes, was dimm'd. He lay dissolv'd in tears of joy, and love, and gratitude, which were mingled with a flood of sorrow and amazement. While all these passions, in pleasing confusion, rush'd upon his soul, his thoughts burst into speech, and the angelic circle heard his suppliant voice, when casting his eyes around, he thus spake:

O thou Son! thou Saviour! Redeemer! Lord! the immortals mourn, when absorb'd in thy love, they, with silent admiration, mention thy thousand thousand glories, thus eclips'd——thus brighten'd by thy sufferings! Ah! I call thee Son; then struck with wonder, pause and weep with them! Jesus my Son!—rapture is in the thought! Whither—Oh whither shall I retire to bear the pleasing —joyful—grief of this inexpressible salvation? Christ Jesus my Son!—O ye angels who were before me, yet not before him, look down—with wonder and amaze, look down on my Son! Thee, O earth, I bless, and thee, O dust, from which I was form'd—O joy!—thou plenitude of joys eternal, that fill all the desires of the immortals! Oh the great, the profound, the heavenly plan! It was thine, O Jehovah!—thine was the glorious, the gracious plan of redemption! thy loving-kindness and compassion exceed the ideas of the rapt seraph!—and thou, O Jesus! didst leave the splendour that surrounds thy throne, and all the pure, the refin'd, the ineffable delights of Heaven, to descend to earth—to become my Son—to redeem my offspring from the power of sin—to perfect redemption for man, by obtaining a glorious

victory over temptations, sufferings, and death! Thus dost thou bruise the serpent's head. Rejoice, O my immortal soul! in the wonders of his love—eternal praises are due to him, who by his sufferings and death, for us procures eternal felicity! Stand still, ye immortal souls, and wondering, behold this abyss—this wide abyss of joy! What, ye Heavens, are the moments of a mortal life to the joys of immortality? Yet each of these is divine—each moment when well employ'd, bears on its rapid wings eternal repose! This shall I—this shall you, my children, enjoy! Lend me your voice, ye celestial spirits, that through the whole creation I may aloud proclaim, that the great Redeemer is now entering the shadow of death. Arise mankind from the squalid earth—arise, lift up your heads; come and wash your souls in tears of pity, love, and joy! The Messiah, your Creator! Brother! Friend! is on the verge of the opening grave. Ye, my children, are his beloved; for you he dies! Come all ye my children to your dying Redeemer—ye who dwell in palaces roof'd with gold, lay down your crowns and come—Ye cottagers leave your lowly hurdled huts, and come. Alas! they hear not my voice—they hear not the voice of love—O thou who offerest thyself a willing sacrifice, let me, with overflowing gratitude, forever admire thy condescending love. Complete—oh complete, thou gracious Sufferer, the mighty work. And now—But ah! what inexpressible melancholy rushes upon my heart!—What sympathetic sorrow penetrates the deep recesses of my soul! Now, O Jesus! thou enterest the dismal path of death! Strengthen, O Eternal Father! me, the first of sinners, who have already seen corruption, that with melting soul, I may behold my Son, my Lord, die—die for repentant sinners!

Adam was silent. In the mean time, the mighty, the humble Sufferer approach'd nearer to the cross, and lifting up his hand, held it before his face, then bowing low, said what no angel heard, nor no creature understood: but Jehovah from his lofty throne, now environ'd with sable clouds, answer'd. The words of the Most High reach'd the distant limits of the wide expanse of Heaven,

and the throne of judgment trembled. The executioners came up to the Redeemer: then all the worlds, with wide extended roar, stopp'd at the points of their orbits, whence they were to proclaim the redemption. They stood still: the thunder of the poles dy'd away, and sunk into silence: silent was the whole motionless creation, shewing to all under Heaven the hour of sacrifice. Thou also, O world of sinners and of graves, stood still! Now the angels, array'd in all their unfading glories, look'd down. Jehovah himself look'd down, and supported the sinking earth: he look'd down on Jesus, whom, with barbarous hands, they nail'd to the cross.

As when almighty death overspreads the creation, and throughout a world corruption silent sleeps, no living being standing on the dust of the dead; so, in solemn silence, the angels, and thine Omnipotent Father, O crucify'd Jesus! look'd on thee. When thy blood first started forth from thy hands and feet, then the amazement of the seraphim grew too strong for silence: they burst into mingled sounds of exultation and mourning. Now were the Heavens fill'd with new adorations. Once more, and again once more, Eloa cast his wondering eyes on the bleeding Jesus; and then, with a dignity with which he had never appear'd to any of the immortals, in an ecstasy of admiration, he flew into the Heaven of Heavens, and with a voice that resembled the sound made by the stars in their circular courses, cry'd, The blood of the Saviour flows! Then flying into the immense abyss, he repeated, The blood of the Saviour flows! He next, with more calm astonishment, bends his course to the earth. As he return'd through the region of creation, he saw the archangels on the suns; worshipping they stood, while from their golden altars a flame arose, like the crimson blush of the morning, and ascended to the Judge's throne. Beneath, through the wide creation, sacrifices blaz'd, as types of the bleeding sacrifice on the cross. Thus the seventy elders of God's chosen people saw on Sinai the appearance of the glory of the Most High: or thus arose the sacred cloud, and

pillar of fire from the tabernacle, to guide the people on their way.

Still the god-like Saviour bleeds; and looking down with divine benignity and grace on the people of Judea, who were crowded together in one great throng from Jerusalem to the cross, he meekly cry'd, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!

Silent amazement accompany'd the voice of love through the crowded multitude. They lift up their faces to the bleeding Redeemer, and beheld him overspread with a deadly paleness. This was all that mortal eyes could see. The souls of the pious dead saw diviner, more mysterious things. They observ'd his struggling life, which Death could not destroy, had not he borne a commission from the Supreme Sovereign of all. They perceiv'd what convulsive terrors shook his mortal frame, while forsaken by his Almighty Father, he hung on the lofty cross! How great the salvation procur'd by those purple streams! What love and compassion were shewn by his bearing his cruel wounds! Behold, he lifts up his eyes to Heaven, seeking ease from pain! but no ease be found, every moment repeated the most dreadful death. With him, as a farther debasement, were crucify'd two malefactors, one on his right hand, the other on his left. Of these, one an obdurate sinner, grown grey in guilt, turning his sullen distorted face to the Mediator, cry'd, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us, and come down from the accursed tree.

The other criminal was in all the vigour of blooming youth; he was not abandon'd, though he had been seduc'd by sin; and now rising superior to his tortures, he boldly reprov'd his fellow-sufferer, crying, Ah, dost thou not fear God, when death—when condemnation are so near? What we suffer, alas! we suffer justly for our crimes; but this man, added he, looking on Jesus, has committed no crime. Then writhing his body towards the Redeemer, he strove to shew his veneration, by lowly bowing his head. The effort tore his lengthening wounds, and the blood gush'd forth in larger streams; but disre-

garding the pain, and the streaming blood, bending still lower, he cry'd, Lord, remember me, when thou enterest into thy kingdom.

The Mediator, with a divine smile, beaming benignity and grace, look'd on the agonizing sinner, and with a gentle voice, reply'd, This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise. With devout trembling the malefactor heard the reviving words, which thrill'd through his soul. With blissful ecstasy his eyes, which swam in tears of joy, remain'd fix'd on the divine Sufferer, the Friend of man, and till his faltering speech began to fail, he attempted, in broken sentences, to express his new and exalted sensations, the delightful foretaste of eternal felicity. What was I? Oh what am I now? cry'd he, with a look of transport, that banish'd from his face the traces of pain. Such misery before, and now such joy! Oh this ecstatic tremor!—these sweet—these rapturous sensations! What dawning felicity breaks in upon my soul! Who is he that hangs next me on the cross? Is he a pious, a just, a holy Prophet?—He is much more—ah, much more—surely he is the Son of God, the Messiah, sent from Heaven! His kingdom then is far—far exalted above the earth! O ye men and angels, this is the promis'd Messiah! Yet how deeply does he humble himself! He stoops to suffer this painful death!—he stoops still lower—he stoops to save me! How incomprehensible! Oh be thou ever belov'd by me, while, lost in wonder, I cannot comprehend this grace! Greater art thou than the highest angel; for, surely an angel could not thus have transform'd my soul—could not, with secret rapture, have rais'd it to God! Yes, thou art the divine Messiah, and thine—thine I shall be forever!

Thus he spake, and then hung absorb'd in silent rapturous astonishment. Whenever he cast up his eyes towards Heaven, or on the extended earth, all seem'd to smile. The peace of God had rested upon him. At a glance from the Redeemer, one of the seraphim hastily left the circle which encompass'd Calvary, and stood under the cross. The import of the divine look was, Thou

seraph bring the redeem'd to me, after his death. He instantly return'd to the angelic circle. This was the invincible Abdiel, who, by the appointment of the Most High, was now an angel of death, and kept the gate of hell. Instantly troops of other angels surrounded him, and ask'd what was his commission? Abdiel with transport answer'd, I receiv'd orders, after the death of that criminal, to conduct him to the Messiah, who hath given him salvation. The delightful task fills me with sweetest joy. The more I think of my commission, the more am I inebriated with bliss. A sinner is deliver'd, and deliver'd in the hour when the gracious Saviour is bleeding—is dying for man! To conduct this purify'd soul, thus prepar'd for Heaven, to its Redeemer, is a delightful task! Congratulate me, O ye angels! on the blissful office.

Here the transported seraph ceas'd. Uriel, the angel of the sun, had long stood prepar'd for his progressive flight; and now the time was come for executing the commands he had receiv'd. Radiant he arose, and proceeded through the Heavens with steady wing, to a remote planet, which the Omnipotent had order'd him to place before the sun, that the life of the divine Redeemer might expire under a more awful covert than that of the night. Already the seraph stood over the pole of the star—of that star where dwell the souls who, before their birth, are remov'd into the momentary mortal life of probation. There Uriel look'd down on the souls of future generations, and calling the star by its immortal name, thus spake:

Adamida, he who has assign'd thee thy station, commands thee to leave thine orbit, and to place thyself opposite to that sun, then soaring upwards, thou art to shroud his light.

The heavenly orbs heard the commanding voice reverberate from the mountains of Adamida. The star tremulous turn'd its thundering poles, and the whole creation resounded, when, with terrific haste, Adamida, in obedience to the divine command, flew amidst overwhelming storms, rushing clouds, falling mountains, and

swelling seas. Uriel stood on the pole of the star, but so lost in deep contemplation on Golgotha, that he heard not the wild tumultuous roar. Its progress was like that of the thunder. Now, O sun! it had reach'd thy region. At the sight of the new solar orb, the tender human souls were fill'd with astonishment, and rais'd themselves above the planet's ascending clouds. Adamida then slacken'd her course, and advanc'd before the disk of the sun, imbibing his remotest beams.

The earth was silent at the descending twilight, and as the gloom increas'd, deeper was the silence. Terrifying shades and palpable darkness came on. The birds ceas'd their notes, and sought the thickest groves: the very insects hurry'd to their retreats, and the wild beasts of the desarts fled to their lonely dens. A death-like silence reign'd through the air. The human race, standing aghast, look'd up to Heaven. The darkness became still more dark. What a night in the midst of day! The intercepting planet had, to all human eyes, extinguish'd the sun! How terrifying the awful night which thus involv'd in sable darkness the extended fields, and was render'd doubly terrible by this solemn silence!

But Jesus, amidst the terrifying gloom, hung unterrify'd on the hidden cross; while the sweat of death trickled down with his dying blood, thou earth wast astonish'd. Not more dismay'd stands an affectionate friend by the grave of the worthy object of his esteem, snatch'd from him in early youth: or the warm admirer of virtue at the moulder'd marble tomb of the patriot, while, with abstractive attitude, he dwells on the sacred ruins. With no dry eye he mourns, grief and soft concern excite emotions that shake his whole frame, and raise a tempest in his sympathizing soul. In such dismay thou, O earth, then lay, and thus didst shake. The foundations of Golgotha quak'd: the darken'd cross trembled, and widen'd the wounds of the divine Sufferer, while his life issu'd forth in larger streams. Tremendous night, wrapt in sable, shrouded the hill of death, the temple, and thee, O Jerusalem. The very angels

observ'd their pure splendor, as the light of the grey evening became pale and dim. Now stood the multitude, fix'd by deep-rooted horror, wildly gazing towards the cross. Dreadfully flow'd the sacred blood, by them unjustly shed. On them it came, and on their children. Fain would they have turn'd aside their faces; but irresistibly impell'd by terror, their eyes were continually directed towards the bloody cross.

Uriel, having still another command to execute, descended from the pole of fix'd Adamida, to the unborn souls on its surface. They saw the celestial intelligence approach; already were they in bodies of the human form, though of an etherial texture, ting'd with the gay splendor of a ruddy evening cloud. Follow me, said Ithuriel: I come from the great Eternal, to take you to yonder earth, overshadow'd by the world on which you live. Ye shall see the Saviour of man—your Saviour; but yet ye know him not. A remote beam of immortal felicity will dart upon you. Follow me, ye blessed, who, when born, will become candidates for immortal life, and all the joys of Heaven.—Come and behold the awful solemnity. To him who now dies on the cross, every knee shall at length bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord and Redeemer.

The conducting spirit extended his wings, and flew encompass'd by the souls. As when the pious sage, fond of meditation, and high celestial converse, hastes by moonlight into a lonely wood, there in devout raptures to contemplate on thee, O thou Infinite and Supreme! while a thousand new, enlarg'd, and sublime ideas crowd on his glowing mind: so amidst the souls, the transported seraph, rapt in thought, speeds his way, and draws near to the earth.

The progenitors of mankind saw the numberless band coming in the high dusky clouds: myriads of myriads of immortals; a majestic train of thinking beings, that have existed ever since the creation! Now for the first time the mother of men, astonish'd, turn'd from the cross her attentive eye. The children come—they come! all the

unborn—the Christians come! Thus spake the general mother to the father of men. But soon she again fix'd her eyes on the bloody cross, adding, These are my immortals!—But ah, by what name do they call thee, O thou who bleedest, who dyest for them? With what hosannas shall they hymn thee, thus disfigur'd with wounds? Oh that you, ye children of salvation!—ye Christians! were now born; that thousands and thousands of weeping mothers had led you to the cross! Oh that you already knew the most holy of those born of women; him who when he first enter'd this mortal state, wept at Bethlehem! —But O Adam! they will know him, they will know the dear Saviour, the Son of the Eternal! But as the flower whose stalk is broken by the boisterous wind, hangs its still beauteous head and dies, so some of you, my beloved children, will fall by the murderous sword of persecution; and hanging your heads, will smile in death. You, happy martyrs, your mother congratulates. Ye are the chosen, the exalted witnesses of the greatest and most important of all deaths. Oh ye glorious sufferers for the cause of truth, of virtue, of your Redeemer! Your pale and hollow cheeks, and all the look of languor, will assume the soft blush of celestial beauty: Your wounds will shine with refulgent splendor: your dying groans be chang'd to sweetest strains of heavenly harmony, and rapturous songs of joy and triumph.

The divine Jesus now lifting up his eyes, fill'd with celestial love, beheld the unborn souls: his look drew forth a sacred tear on every cheek, and each soul trembling with holy awe, felt new sensations.

Now the colour of life instantaneously flush'd on the face of the dying Jesus; but as instantaneously vanish'd, never to return: his faded cheeks became sunk, and his head hung on his breast: with difficulty he rais'd it up towards Heaven; but unable to sustain its weight, soon it dropp'd. The pendant sky form'd an arch round Golgotha, more silent and dreadful than the sepulchral vault, and sable clouds of wide extent hung over the cross. In an instant the silence ceas'd, and a noise usher'd in by

no murmuring sound, suddenly burst from the earth, with a roar so tremendous, that the sepulchres of the dead, and the pinnacles of the temple shook. This was the forerunner of a tempest, which, rushing on the lofty cedars, tore them up by the roots, and made the towers of Jerusalem quake. Then loud thunder roll'd through the sky, and the deafning clap bursting over the Dead Sea, its affrighted waters foam'd, and the heavens and the earth trembled.

Instantly Eloa form'd a great and bold resolution, and no sooner was it conceiv'd than put in execution. He resolv'd to see face to face the great Jehovah, in all his tremendous glory. Thrice he bow'd before the adorable victim, then hasted towards Heaven. Quick he ascended to the path enlighten'd by suns, but scarce knew the celestial way, so obscur'd was it by hovering mists. At the distance of seven suns beyond the entrance, he met two angels of death, with their faces veil'd. He view'd them with astonishment, but, without stopping, continu'd his flight up to the highest Heaven.

Silence, with steady foot, again stood on the earth, again the gloom began to disperse, and the unborn, the human race, and the dead, speechless gaz'd on the Redeemer. Meanwhile our general mother, with soothing Melancholy, now her sweet companion, view'd her Son, the divine Saviour, under his lingering death. On beholding him, her eyes were sometimes dimm'd by obscuring affliction, and soft sympathetic sorrow, and sometimes lost the power of sight. The Messiah now downward bent his looks on a fair mortal, whom with fix'd regard he view'd, while she with drooping head, and a countenance pale and mournful, trembling, stood at the foot of the cross, involv'd in silent sorrow: her eyes fix'd by grief on the ground, shed no tears; for the kind relief of those heart-easing drops was now withheld. This, said the first of women, can be no other than the Saviour's mother—Ah, she is—thy grief, O my daughter, tells me that thou art she who bore thy Lord and mine. ——Thou art Mary. What thou now feel'st, I felt for

my dear murder'd Abel, when he lay breathless, with his own blood distain'd—How I pity thee!—thy grief equals what I then felt, O thou tender mother of my dear dying Jesus! Thus to herself she spake, while, with an affectionate look, her eyes hung on Mary: nor yet had they left her belov'd daughter, had not two angels of death, with awful, solemn flight, approach'd from the east. Silent, and slow they came. Their look was like that of a flaming fire. Destruction sat in their faces, and their vesture was the gloom of night. Thus they mov'd to the hill of the cross. Sent by the Supreme Lord, they drew near, and so tremendous was their appearance, that the souls of the progenitors of the human race sunk nearer to the earth. As far as those who have left their earthly tabernacles, can lose themselves in the thoughts of the grave, they now approach'd the verge of mortality, and images of death, with the terrors of sepulchral corruption, hover'd round the immortals.

The angel of death standing on the hill, face to face, view'd the dying Saviour, then one rising to the right, and the other to the left, with sounding pinions, seven times flew round the cross. Two wings cover'd their feet, two trembling wings their faces, and with two they flew. These, when expanded, sent forth groans and sighs, and sounds of death. Thus to the man of humanity resounds the field of battle, where thousands lie swimming in blood: with horror he turns away, and flying from the groans of one, his ears are struck with the groans of another. Dreadful the angels hover'd. The terrors of God sat on their expanded wings. The terrors of God rush'd down. Then horrors flew: seven times they flew around. The dying Jesus, raising his languid head, look'd at the angels of death, then cast up his eyes to Heaven, and cry'd, with a voice which none but his almighty Father heard, Ah cease to encrease the torture of these wounds! I know the beat of their wings, these sounds of death. O my God, forbear! Instantly the two angels bent their airy flight towards Heaven; but first cast a dreadful look on Jerusalem, and on her inhabitants

who stood around. On their ascent they left the ethereal spectators under deeper dejection, and pensiveness more profound. With disorder'd countenances they stand looking on the graves, then at each other, and then towards Heaven: but soon they again turn their faces to him who bleeds on the cross. Innumerable they stand, and though every eye speaks grief or consternation, no immortal eyes express such tenderness as those of the mother of men. She bows her head towards the earth, the grave of her descendants, and spreads her rais'd arms to Heaven. Now she lays her mournful brow in the dust: now folds her hands: she is half rais'd. Again she droops. She rises, and earnest looks around. She is encompass'd by darkness. She is among the bones—the bones of the dead. At length, with faltering voice, she gives utterance to her thoughts, and from her lips, immortal harmony flows forth in sighs.

May I, O thou divine Messiah! presume to call thee Son?—It was my crime that brought thee down from Heaven, and nail'd thee to the cross. Had it not been for me, who have expos'd my offspring to sin and death, thou wouldst not have been my Son—thou wouldst not now hang bleeding on thy gaping wounds; nor ever, ever die! What an exchange has my guilt brought on thee, O thou most loving and belov'd! thou hast exchang'd bliss, for misery! life and ineffable joy, for torment unutterable, and all the agonies of expiring nature! I——alas! I was the cause! yet turn—turn not away from me thy dying eyes. Thine all-gracious Father, the prime source of goodness and of love, has condescended to forgive me—Thou too hast pity'd——hast forgiven me. O my Redeemer! the Redeemer of my offspring! the high arch of Heaven resounded, and the throne of the Eternal echo'd back thy praise, when thou, the belov'd of thy Father, offer'dst to give thy life for repentant sinners, that we might enjoy life everlasting.—And now thou diest—I stand absolv'd by boundless grace—But thou diest!—This overwhelms my soul——It throws back immortality into the grave! O thou divine Saviour, allow

me to weep for thee, and forgive—forgive the soothing tears of an immortal! Yes, O thou dear Redeemer! thou belov'd victim of death! thou forgivest me.—Forgive me, also, O my pious offspring; for when me, your last groans, when me, your dying sighs curse, as your murderer, then let your hearts bless me; for I am also the mother of the Saviour, of the Prince of Grace, of the Author and the Finisher of your faith, who dies that you may live! Curse me not then, O my children! for I, when mortal, often shed the kindly tear for you, and when my struggling heart fail'd, for you I dying wept, and pour'd forth tears for those who, after me, were to sink into corruption. When ye now, O my pious, my virtuous children, expire, ye shall sleep in Jesus, and be convey'd to the realms of ineffable delight!——convey'd to him, whom ye now see bleeding on the cross! Then curse not your mother, O my children! for though I render'd you mortal, Jesus Christ is also my Son, and he will clothe you with immortality! But, O my dear Lord! my Redeemer! my best Beloved! whose kindness and grace no words can express, thou diest! Oh that this sorrowful hour were pass'd, and that thou hadst escap'd from pain, to the felicity that awaits thee, at the right hand of the Majesty on High——Ah, he grows paler!—his cheeks fall—his divine head sinks lower on his bosom, which still heaves with love to man.—That sigh, O Death, is thy voice!—But my dear Jesus bends his looks on me! O ye seraphim, rejoice, he turns his face to me! Let the gates of Heaven echo back the sound, that the great, the divine Redeemer once more turns his face to the mother of mortals! The joys of eternity already shine around me! I lift up my eyes to the Most High, the Omnipresent God, whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain; I stretch forth my hands to his beloved Son! the Brightness of the Father's glory! the Restorer of innocence! the Reviver of the dead! the Judge of the earth! the Redeemer of man! and with amazement attempt to express my gratitude: but in vain: words cannot describe what I feel: they are formed to express

feebler sensations. My soul swells with rapture. I am lost in transport, in ecstasy, in joy unutterable! Bless the Lord, O my children! bless the great Omnipotent, the original source of joy, of love, of happiness! O pour out your souls in grateful praise to the Lord, your Redeemer, and Friend. By his bloody sweat in Gethsemane, by those wounds, and that pure blood now shed for you; by his drooping head, his dim and languid eyes, his countenance disfigur'd by pain and approaching death, I conjure you to love and imitate your Lord, your Friend, your Saviour! In his name I bless you, O mine offspring, and may the blessing of the Lord always rest upon you!

THE

MESSIAH.

BOOK IX.

The Argument.

Eloa returns from the throne of God, and relates what he has seen. The behaviour of Peter, who joins Samma, and a stranger, and afterwards successively meets Lebbeus, his brother Andrew, Joseph and Nicodemus, and then returns to Golgotha, where he sees John, and the female friends of Jesus. A conversation between Abraham and Moses. They are join'd by Isaac. Abraham and Isaac address the Messiah. A cherub conducts the souls of the pious heathens to the cross. Christ speaks to John and Mary. Abbadona, assuming the appearance of an angel of light, comes to the cross; but being known by Abdiel, flies. Obaddon conducts the soul of Judas to the cross, then gives him a distant view of Heaven, and at length conducts him to Hell.

THE

MESSIAH.

BOOK IX.

ELOA now return'd from the throne of the Eternal. Fill'd with deep contemplations, he slowly hover'd over the pinnacles of the temple, and then came to the assembly of the progenitors of the human race, whom he thus address'd:

Before I communicate my thoughts, oh join in prayer with me. Ere I speak, I will offer my adorations. All then, with humble prostration, in silence ador'd the Infinite and Eternal, and silent rose. Eloa still continu'd rapt in thought; but at last said:

To the First of beings, to him whom no name can express, no thought conceive, I soar'd, desiring to see him face to face, in all his tremendous glory. I reach'd the suns that gild the radiant path to Heaven, and they were dimm'd. I came to the celestial pole, and there the bright shining light struggled with blackest gloom. I then ascended to the throne, and there darkness progressive, deepen'd beyond darkness; and now—I seek for words, and do not find them, none can express the deepness of the sable cloud, in which the Eternal was involv'd, nor the awful terrors that environ'd his throne. Amidst the profound silence of the fair creation, I stood, and heard the far distant roar of the infernal floods. Slow I still advanc'd; when the first of the angels of death call'd, Who is this that rises with too bold a wing? I, trembling, started back, and sunk prostrate, adoring

the Omnipotent in silence. Thus Eloa spake, and veiling his face, withdrew.

The head of the divine Jesus now hanging on his breast, he seem'd to slumber. The storm of the blasphemous multitude was laid, and all was calm as Ocean reclining on the peaceful shores. Those who rever'd the Saviour walk'd about the skirts of Golgotha, where, with weeping eyes, they might obtain a distant view of the Redeemer. Yet each avoided the others: their afflicted hearts allowing them no tongue for converse, for bitter converse adding pain to their distress'd minds. Only the belov'd disciple, and the tender mother of Jesus, continu'd with each other at the foot of the cross.

The disciple, who had sworn that he knew not his divine Master, was now walking solitary about the mountain. Thus by the winding shore wanders a son, within sight of a rock on which his father was wreck'd; speechless he walks, with his eyes fix'd on the spot where his tender parent perish'd, and lifting up his eyes to Heaven, bursts into bitter lamentations. Peter now faint with weeping, stood on an eminence near mount Calvary, too weak to express his grief, too weak to lift up his supplicating hands to Heaven. Ithuriel, his guardian angel, with pity beheld his grief, and infus'd into his heart some drops of consolation. This, though an immortal, was all he could give. The afflicted disciple felt the lenient balm thrill through his soul, and now looking up, with longing eyes, sought his friends, desiring to receive from them reproof and comfort. He stood with his eyes directed towards Jerusalem; for up the hill of death he did not dare to look. He now strove to discover the proud city, but though of large extent, and lofty its towers, it was wrapp'd in a gloom so dismal, that through it he could scarce perceive the pinnacles of the high seated temple, and the towers of Sion. At length his eyes were drawn aside by a distant murmuring sound, which arose from the strangers, who, being come to the festival, were hasting to obtain

a sight of the crucify'd Prophet. To them Peter went, and among the more silent groupes of the people, sought his fellow disciples, but none he found. At length a conversation suspends his search. One of a swarthy complexion, richly dress'd in a foreign robe, ask'd a man of an open countenance, who held by the hand his little son, for what crime the malefactor, on the middle and more lofty cross, was put to death? His crime! said the other, with an air of surprise; He is put to death, because he hath given health to the sick, feet to the lame, ears to the deaf, eyes to the blind! because he reliev'd the possess'd, of which number I was one, and freed us from our torments! because he even rais'd the dead! because by his powerful preaching, he open'd to our enraptur'd souls the gates of eternal life! because his life was holy, was blameless, was divine!

Here seeing Peter, he stretch'd out his hand towards him, and said, This is one of the chosen friends of the great Prophet, who daily saw and heard him, and whom he instructed in the knowledge of the truth. Do thou inform him, added he, turning to Peter—inform this stranger and me, why they put this divine person to death. Comply, O thou man of God! with my request, and turn not away thine eyes from me. Thou know'st him. Thee he lov'd! for thou wast one of his chosen disciples. Brothers have less love for each other, than thou and John have for him.

Peter still turn'd from them, not because he was known; for now he was prepar'd to die: but his being join'd with the faithful John, pierc'd his very soul. My friends, said he at last, with faltering voice, There dies the holy!—Then bursting into tears, he hid himself among the crowd.

Thus he left Samma and Joel, with the favourite of queen Candace, the eunuch, afterwards baptiz'd by Philip. These, fill'd with admiration, now mov'd slowly towards Golgotha. Meanwhile Peter discover'd at a distance Lebbeus, who stood, leaning with a dejected look, against a wither'd tree, and went towards him.

Lebbeus not yet observing him, Peter, with a faint trembling voice, said, Hast thou too seen him on the cross? Thou, 'tis true, art unhappy, yet thou canst lift up thine eyes to him: but I—oh pity—pity my misery!—Here—here he bleeds! added he, laying his hand on his breast, Here my swelling, tortur'd heart bleeds! Will not my dear friend speak to me? Will he not afford me one word of consolation?—Thou art silent—still art thou silent. In vain Lebbeus strove to give utterance to the strong emotions of his mind. Yet the agitations that appear'd in his countenance, and his falling tears, were not speechless. But no comfort could Peter's soul receive from them. With heavy heart he left that affectionate disciple, and depress'd with a new load of woe, again hid himself in the crowd. At length, having once more escap'd from the multitude, he suddenly saw before him his brother Andrew. Him he would have shunn'd; but receiving a sign to retire farther from the people, Peter follow'd him, and, on joining him, cry'd, My brother!—my dear brother!—Then embrac'd him: not indeed with his usual fervor, for with feeble grasp he held him, and hung on his neck, weeping. O my dear Peter, return'd Andrew, with more compos'd affliction; fain would I, but I cannot, suppress my grief! My heart bleeds as well as thine!—I mourn for thee. The best of Men! the most faithful, the most loving Friend! the Son of God!—thou—alas!—before his enemies—hast deny'd!

Meek-hearted grief, sacred to him whom he had deny'd, and effusions of cordial thanks for his brother's fidelity, appear'd in Peter's eyes; but speechless were his lips. While they embrac'd, they scarce saw each other. They then walk'd hand in hand, while their eyes, still suffus'd in tears, scarce allow'd the power of sight, till at length, overcome by the languor of grief, their hands sunk, and losing their hold, they parted. Peter, still disconsolate, and still earnestly breathing after consolation, walk'd alone; but not far: soon he cast his eyes on two persons whom he esteem'd, yet strove to avoid; but was too near. Does the dear disciple of the divine

teacher not know us? said Joseph of Arimathea. We also, O Simon! are his disciples. We were so in secret, but now we are ready to acknowledge him before all the people. Nicodemus, my worthy friend, who cannot be unknown to thee, has boldly declar'd for Christ before the Sanhedrim: with unshaken courage he, before them all, spake in his defence: but I, alas! was too late in acknowledging him. I was intimidated—coward as I was, I did not dare to express my thoughts before that impious assembly! Forbear, dear Joseph, said Nicodemus, to afflict thy tender mind. Thou 'cam'st away with me, and hast already own'd the divine Jesus. Joseph here lifting up his eyes, swimming in tears, to Heaven, cry'd, Hear, O hear, thou God and Father of the holy Jesus! the voice of my supplications. Him whom I so faintly own'd while he liv'd, may I, before all the world, undauntedly acknowledge when dead.

Here Joseph was silent. His petition arose to the eternal throne, and with the grant descended divine grace. Nicodemus now addressing himself to Peter, said, Why, O Simon! dost thou turn thy sorrowful face from us? We feel all that thou feelest. We feel his death—the near approaching death of the holiest among men! Perhaps he is expiring! Perhaps he now breathes his last sigh! But, O thou, his dear disciple! communicate thy thoughts to us! Let thy gracious words pour into our souls an healing balm; and let not thy melancholy eye upbraid us with having so long, only in private, acknowledg'd the divine Jesus—thy Lord and ours. As a tree seiz'd by the blustering winds, quivering bends its lofty top, so Peter, hanging down his head, stood trembling. Overpower'd by remorse, he hid his face in his garment. Then fled, seeking rest in greater pain. He hasted back to Golgotha, and, with labouring steps, ascended the hill. He now more freely breathes. He ventures to raise his eyes to the lofty cross; but not to the awful face of his dying Lord. Under it he beheld, near each other, John and the mother of the sacred victim, motionless, silent, and with eyes which, through

excess of grief, shed no tears. At a small distance stood many of the faithful, who had follow'd the Saviour out of Galilee. Though low their birth, though obscure their rank, though mean their appearance, sacred history has transmitted the names of some of that virtuous band to posterity: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, Mary the mother of the sons of Zebedee, and thou, O Mary, who now didst behold, extended on the cross, thy divine Son, the best and most amiable of the race of men. These, with many others, from the warmth of their affection, ventur'd to stand near their dying Lord.

Mary Magdalene had sunk on the ground, longing for death.—Carry'd away by the torrent of her sorrow, she abandon'd every hope, every idea of the Saviour's miracles, and lay impassion'd on the hill, filling the air with her complaints. The mother of Joses, though herself inconsolable, prompted by the tenderness of her soul, attempted to give her the comfort she herself could not feel; and, with the soft voice of pity, strove to alleviate her distress: but soon the agony of her own grief render'd her silent. Meanwhile the mother of the two sons of Zebedee, pale and faded with grief, stood weeping in the dreary gloom, with uplifted eyes, and wringing her hands, as if she meant to say, How long will the divine vengeance be delay'd? Soon will it fall on this cruel people!

But none with more fervour of soul, none with more cordial compassion, view'd the dying Jesus, than the converted criminal. This escap'd not the notice of the immortals, more especially of those who were once of the human race; while the chief object of their exalted sensations was the grace of the Redeemer. Abraham, enraptur'd with the thought of his salvation, observ'd him with warm affection; till at length the affecting sympathy with which the already happy convert beheld the Holy Sufferer, struck the patriarch with such mingled pity and joy, that, breaking forth from his mute astonishment, he turn'd to Moses, who stood by his side;

and the exalted father of the twelve-trib'd Judea, thus spake to the inspir'd legislator, the builder of the tabernacle:

What we, O son! behold—what these few hours display, will furnish us with discourse through the endless ages of eternity. Now I am recover'd from silent astonishment, let us take a few drops from this ocean of wonders. Thou sawest the glory of God on Horeb; I in Mamre's sacred grove. Mild was then its appearance: then the divine lips sounded melodious grace. Thus sweet, thus ravishingly soft was the voice of the Saviour, when he spake pardon to the criminal. O thou pure, thou spotless Jesus, thou suffering Messiah, how great is my joy at the redemption thou procurest for sinners, my children! my jubilant songs shall join those of the heavenly host! See how this new disciple smiles at his approaching death! How the mercies of the Most High, and the divine benevolence of the great Redeemer, swell his struggling heart! How the transports of eternal life beam around him! Yet, though the repose of a better life is so near, with what soft compassion does he look on the sufferings of his gracious Saviour! But that my unhappy—wicked children should thus ungratefully, with cruel hands, slay the Lord of Life, would, was I mortal, fill me with such grief as to bow me down to the grave! What Gabriel in vain strove to conceal from me, let me communicate to thee; and then may the dread idea be forever banish'd from my mind. The gracious Redeemer, who, with the marks of these wounds, shall come to judge the world, has already foretold the fate of these abandon'd sinners: nay, they have imprecated the divine vengeance on themselves. The heathen governor sought to save him, and, with reluctance, pass'd sentence; while they cry'd out, His blood be upon us and our children. Oh that no angel of death had engrav'd the dreadful words on an eternal rock, and plac'd it by the throne of the Most High! I see—I see nations coming from the ends of the earth, to pay homage to the divine Jesus; to listen to his precepts, and to bow before him,

their Lord and Saviour. But among these I see not my children.

Moses answer'd, Thou father of Isaac, of Jacob, and of the faithful who adher'd to the worship of Jehovah, when the multitude flock'd to graven images; thou father of her who bore the Redeemer, and of him who accomplishes the great work of redemption! O Abraham! lift up thine eyes and behold. What I shall say is to thee already known; but 'tis good frequently to gaze on the fair face of truth. There are a people of judgment and of grace. The Unsearchable, who points with his right hand to mercy, and with his left to judgment, hath founded these on a rock, that all the sons of the dust may clearly perceive that they have the power of choosing life and death; whosoever therefore, on observing the monitory rock, will not look up to it, to see and learn, is his own destroyer: he condemns himself.

Thou, my son, return'd Abraham, hast observ'd the grateful smile with which I have listen'd to thy words. Perhaps, when they have long been try'd, they will forsake the ways of sin, and then the son will no longer bear the iniquities of the father. Then, O Moses, then perhaps they will return—sweetest transports flow in upon me, and peace from God smiles all around! Oh then they will return to the great Redeemer! the Saviour of all mankind!—to him who, by day in the cloud, and in the night by a pillar of fire, led their forefathers to the land of Canaan, and on the cross now bleeds for them. Return, return, O my children!—return to him who is ready to save!—to him!—to him whom ye are now putting to death!—to the lamb that will soon be slain!—to eternal life!

Here, with supplicating look, he rais'd his eyes to Heaven. Isaac, his beloved son, once the comfort of his declining age, seeing him, came in his juvenile form, and with a smile of joy, mingled with concern, instantly cry'd, Ah father, in thy countenance I see the warm emotions of thy mind! But alas! our children cruelly slay him, who sanctify'd himself for them! Yet, O Jeho-

vah! thou wilt at length have mercy on them! thou wilt bear them, on eagle's wings, to their Saviour! With this contemplation felicity comes hovering round me, and ecstatic bliss rushes upon my exulting soul! Yet one idea fills me with sacred awe. Well dost thou remember, when on yonder sacred mount—(for ever sacred let it be to me!)—thou ledst me to the altar. Thy son, more cheerful than thyself, went by thy side, rejoicing that he was going with thee to sacrifice to the Eternal: but when I lay bound on the wood, and the lighted brand flam'd by my side; when I lifted up my eyes, swimming in tears, to Heaven; when you gave me the parting kiss; then, turning from me, drew the glittering blade, and held destruction over thy son—But I pass over that trying hour, since crown'd with ages of purest joy—Thine Isaac was surely chosen to prefigure the sacrifice of the Son of the Most High—the sacrifice that now bleeds on Golgotha. This fills me with a sweet and rapturous melancholy, that overpowers my immortal soul.

Thus Isaac spake, and Abraham in soft accents reply'd, Let us bow before the Redeemer. Instantly they kneel'd: one of Abraham's arms enclos'd that of his son, and their folded hands were rais'd to Golgotha. The father then cry'd, O thou Redeemer from sin! thou Joy of believers! thou Son of the Supreme Father! what have I felt since a mortal mother bore thee at Bethlehem! The angels, lost in astonishment, comprehend not the wonders of thy grace and love. Thou, the inspiring theme of their jubilant songs, shroudest thyself in humble life. Scarce could the spirits on high know thee under the lowly disguise. O thou in whom the brightness of thy Father's glory shone! thou hast walk'd the steep, the solitary way of mortality, meditating on thy death; and now art thou come to the solemn, the momentous period—to thy last, thy most painful sufferings, which long before I was born on this earth, thou, O my Saviour, and the Saviour of all that come to thee, didst choose! —didst choose for man!—and now thou bleed'st—thou dy'st!—O Jesus, thou art far superior to our compassion!

Yet we feel the great, the dreadful stroke, with which death strikes thee, and at which the immense creation shudders. Have mercy on us, O God Most High! thou spring of never-failing mercy and of grace! that we may not too deeply feel the sufferings of thy Son. Have mercy—have mercy on all who rapt in admiration, surround the Saviour—on all, like us, ally'd to the dust.

Here Abraham ceas'd, and both were silent, till Isaac ask'd, Who are the souls that cherub is leading to the cross? The radiant band approach'd from the distant sky, beautiful as the rising morn. They had quitted their tabernacles of flesh, and came from all the nations of earth, extending from pole to pole, where their bodies had been consum'd by the quick devouring flames of the funeral pile, or committed to the silent grave. Their hearts were sincere and pure, if the purity of mortals deserves the name. Animated by the love of virtue, fairest ornament of the human mind, and ever lovely in the eyes of the Universal Parent, they pass'd through this inferior life; but had not been illumin'd by the light of an external revelation. Thousands of these happy souls were led by the meditative cherub, while seiz'd with their first astonishment at the glories of their new state of existence, they with silent rapture ador'd the Sovereign Lord of all, who is no respecter of persons, and whose tender mercies are over all his works. To them the cherub turn'd his face, when Abraham and the other patriarchs heard him thus address the souls, while they approach'd the gloom-surrounded cross.

What ye, bless'd spirits, see, consider with all the powers your new and rapturous sensations have left you. Here is fresh subject for your love, your gratitude, your devout astonishment. None born of woman can without the Mediator, who there bleeds for you, see the Eternal. Ye happy souls, to you I now reveal the great mystery of eternity. There Jesus, the divine Jesus, for men, for repentant sinners, for the heirs of death, dies on the cross. Behold the Son of the Most High, born on earth, born of a mortal mother. (See there she stands at the

foot of the cross.) Fastings, prayers, miracles, instructions, acts of beneficence, sufferings on sufferings, fill'd up the life of the gracious Saviour: and now—(the joys of eternity hang upon the great event)—now he dies—— he dies for all the sons of earth—he dies for you!—Had he not from the beginning of the world been chosen the Redeemer, all would have dy'd; but through him, life and immortality are brought to light, and by his obedience, all shall be made alive. The most High God is pleas'd with your sincere endeavours to know and obey him. Happy souls! for his sake, your sincerity is accepted. He whom ye strove to resemble, has seen your tears; has heard your petitions to be freed from sin, which ye felt, which ye conquer'd, though ye knew not all its evils. Your prayers have ascended to the highest Heavens, and were acceptable to him, who searcheth the hearts of the sons of men. Jesus, who bleeds on the cross, is your Friend, your Redeemer, your Intercessor. Oh give thanks to the great Mediator! to the Dispenser of eternal life! to the suffering Jesus, the Son of the Most High God!

These souls, fill'd with inexpressible and blissful sensations, mingled with gentle dejection and astonishment, sunk down in rapturous adoration of the gracious Saviour, who had lov'd them before the foundation of the world, and was now dying, to perfect the redemption of the human race.

Salim and Selith, the guardian angels of John and Mary, observ'd the grateful prostration of these enraptur'd souls, and Salim cry'd, How sensible, O Selith, are these new immortals of their felicity! How the joys of Heaven already flow in upon them! Now are they forever deliver'd from the troubles of mortal life: from the afflictions which fall so thick and heavy on the inhabitants of the earth! The dear persons under our care, were once fill'd with peace from God, and with such sublime sensations, as scarce to feel the heavy clog of mortality; but now, those pale cheeks, those agonizing looks, those bleeding wounds, have chill'd the ecstasies

of the mother and the friend! I, O Selith, also feel them!—I feel the cruel nails that pierce their souls! I, reply'd Selith, have seen many of the afflicted: but no distress like theirs! Yet is my compassion mix'd with wonder. Is it not strange, that they who are belov'd by the Eternal, should thus deeply suffer? yet with pleasure I reflect, that God frequently imparts consolation to his suffering servants, when every ray of hope seems vanish'd. And, O Salim! if my ardent desire of seeing them again favour'd by divine consolations does not deceive me, I now see beaming from the benevolent eyes of the Messiah, emanations of comfort. Thus spake Selith. He err'd not; for the Redeemer would no longer withhold his pity from John and the afflicted Mary: but cast down on them a look, whence reviving effusions stream'd into their fainting souls. Then, inclining his divine face towards them, Mary, with trembling expectation, listen'd, while to her ear the voice of her gracious Saviour thus descended: Mother, behold thy Son. Then to the disciple he said, Behold thy mother! Now these affectionate friends, with astonishment, gratitude and tears, turn'd to each other.

The dying Jesus still continu'd suspended in torture. At the idea of his sufferings the soul trembles, and to express them, the bless'd spirits that surround the throne of the Omnipotent do not presume to attempt. Pensive silence encompass'd the hill of death; and the earth incessantly trembled thro' its secret caverns. Yet in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, its latent trepidations were not heard. Once did the concussion reach the rebellious city; but it only rais'd an obscure sensation: something of a distant terror of impending vengeance, for the blood that was then flowing, seiz'd the hearts of the multitude.

Now the secret convulsions of Nature cleft a rocky mountain far from Olivet, into the centre of which, Abbadona had retir'd to mourn in the depths of the earth. He was sitting on the declivity of a subterranean rock, viewing with fix'd attention, a torrent which fell at his

feet. His listening ear was following the roar of the foaming stream, which, flowing from the summit of the lofty mountain, was dash'd from cliff to cliff, when suddenly he felt under him a progressive trembling, and the rocks fell from their aspiring heights. Abbadona, terrify'd at the convulsive pangs of Nature, cry'd, Does the Earth lament that she has brought forth children? and is she tir'd of bearing her mouldering issue in her bosom, which is now become a perpetual grave to them? Thus throng'd with human bodies, she is within dreadful, while without she is cloth'd with a verdant robe, and adorn'd with blooming flowers. Or, alas! does she lament the great, the divine person, whom I in midnight darkness saw in humble prostration, suffering!—Ah, what is his fate? Why do I delay to see him again? Is the heavy hand of awful Justice nearer me, when expos'd on the open earth, than when here? No, where can I escape from Justice! should I fly from the creation, still would she follow me!—I will then seek him. The issue of his dreadful sufferings will I see, and all the wonders of these great transactions know. But with what troops of celestial spirits is he surrounded! Ah, struck by a sudden glance from them, I lately fled, appall'd! Should I venture to counterfeit their heavenly effulgence, and transform myself into the fair semblance of an angel of light, would not the God of truth, with his pointed lightning, strip off the disguise, and the angels, indignant, see me array'd in this odious garb of guilt? But Satan is permitted to appear like an angel of light! he who has provok'd the Most High by greater crimes—by incessant acts of deepest guilt! Ah this disguise is not to conceal any base design, harbour'd in my tortur'd heart! But shall Abbadona use disguise?—Retire, retire, O wretch, rejected and forlorn!—retire, and in secret contemplate thy misery!—Am I excluded then from going? and must I not know the end of his most wonderous sufferings?—But, how should I be able to behold the looks of the angel, and not fly?

Thus fluctuating, and still dubious, he arose from the

cavern: but scarce had he alighted on the surface of the earth, when with astonishment he drew back: for then seeing her involv'd in the dreadful gloom of night, he cry'd, with a tremulous voice, At midday, overspread with such thick darkness! Is the Earth ripe for judgment? Is she now to be destroy'd? Doth the Omnipotent hold her in the hollow of his hand?—But wherefore? Does the wonderful Sufferer lie bury'd in her bosom? and does God require him of her sons?——But can the Messiah die?—Wherever I turn, perplexity on each new idea dwells. Much better is it for me to haste, and seek him —to see, and, by that means, to learn, than to sit alone, lost in fruitless conjectures.

Thus resolv'd, he stood on the tree-crown'd summit of a lofty mountain, and amidst the shrouding darkness, long, with quick eye, sought the holy city. At length he perceiv'd it, when, through the hovering clouds, it seem'd like a heap of ruins. Now, trembling, he tries to assume a bright ethereal form, and all the juvenile beauty with which he shone in the blissful vale of peace: but awkward is the imitation. Radiant tresses, indeed, flow beneath his shoulders, which are adorn'd with golden wings; within his eyes he retains his tears, and the lustre of the dawning day overspreads his lucid countenance. Thus array'd in beauty, he, with tremulous flight, chooses his way through the thickest gloom. In traversing the coast of the Dead Sea, he hears an unusual noise in the agitated waters: with the roar of the waves are intermingled the groans of anguish, and the howls of despair. So, if guilty cities are shaken by earthquakes, when one that has most offended thinks that she shall sink into ruins, groans and sighs, and shrieks arise with each shock, and are mingled with the dull sound of the subterranean scourge: the earth heaves and trembles: the air resounds with the fall of polluted temples and marble palaces; with the redoubled shrieks and groans of the inhabitants: while the pale traveller, fill'd with terror, flies. Thus the affrighted Abbadona hears the roaring of the Dead Sea, mingled with the groans and

bellowings of the two apostates, and knowing them, with fluttering wing, leaves the doleful shores.

He now draws near to the angelic circle. At the august appearance he is suddenly overpower'd by an insurmountable terror, and his mimic lustre fades. The first angels, immers'd in the contemplation of the holy, the dying Messiah, observ'd not his approach; but he escap'd not Eloa's piercing eye. He instantly knew him, and thus said to himself, The forsaken of God, this fearful, soul-tormented seraph, would then behold the crucify'd Jesus! Already has he seen his passion in the garden. He seeks him again! How restless—how miserable in his state!—A prey to incessant remorse!—Long, very long, has he been dissolv'd in these bitter tears of anguish!—O God, thou Sovereign Judge, all thy purposes thou wilt accomplish! Thy ways are ever just and righteous. Then in humble prostration, he pray'd in silence. On his rising he made a sign to an angel, who instantly stood before him. Haste, blessed spirit, said Eloa, haste to the angels, and to the progenitors of the human race, and thus address them, Abbadona, trembling and anxious, is drawing towards us. Should he venture to mingle with you, oh forbid him not; for, in extreme distress he comes, to obtain an awful view of the Redeemer of man. Let none order him to fly. Let none discountenance a mind so humbled. Indulge him in this afflictive alleviation of anguish. About the cross are greater sinners than Abbadona.

The fallen seraph hover'd, trembling, about the angelic assembly. He hesitated; flutter'd forward; stopt; alighted on the ground. He was suddenly desirous of returning back. He then animated himself with the thought, that none but the Messiah could be encompass'd by so spacious, so pompous a circle of angels. He now flew amidst them. The angels turn'd and saw him; they saw the faint disguise. Abbadona wore a ghastly smile; a lustre that irradiates none of the bless'd, mingled with fix'd horror and predominant grief, which he strove in vain to conceal. With silent commiseration

they suffer'd him to pass, and he approach'd the cloud-topp'd hill; but seeing those on each cross, he swiftly turn'd aside. No, I will not see them, said he; I will not see the faces of the dying! Your sufferings pierce me too deep! They present to my thoughts images of horror! too loudly do they accuse me to the Sovereign Judge! Alas! a cursory, a momentary sight of their wounds has already fill'd me with raging anguish.—Ye men, my companions in wretchedness, as in guilt, ye wickedly compel your brethren, before the face of the sun, before innumerable multitudes, solemnly to suffer death! Never shall mine eyes see them, whom, from cruelty or from justice, ye devote to corruption!—But banish—O banish, Abbadona! from thy distressful mind, these tumultuous thoughts, big with overwhelming woe—I seek the holy Prophet; but where shall I find him? It is not for nothing that all the host of Heaven are assembled here! They encircle him—He is in this sacred place—But where? When in the garden on mount Olivet, the place dignified by his presence was cover'd with the thickest gloom; here this hill, strew'd with bones, is most obscur'd. But can he not be seen?—O that some angel would point him out!—Dare I, unhappy, ask an angel to shew me him?—Did they know me by this tremor, by this melancholy confusion, would they not order me to quit the place?—But rapt in divine contemplations on this holy person, they do not even observe me.—Ah, where shall I find him? He is, perhaps, in the temple—in the Holy of Holies—Is he praying there? Shall none see his sufferings, his bloody sweat?—Yet every heavenly eye is directed more to the hill, than to the temple.—Ah, wretch! how debas'd art thou! thou dar'st not lift up thy bashful eye to the faithful ministers of God; and yet on this hill of sculls presumest to appear before them, while adorn'd with all their radiant splendor! Perhaps here, where dying malefactors afford the most manifest proof of the fall of man, Jesus concludes his earthly sufferings. Perhaps, prostrate among human bones, he is here offering up his supplications to the Sovereign Judge.

Ah, must I again turn my face towards this mount of death!

He then turn'd, hovering slow and timid around the hill, till descending, he sought with quick and piercing eye under the crosses. There he found John, and careful watch'd his looks.—Meanwhile the gracious Saviour still hung on the darken'd cross, and every feature of his agonizing countenance seem'd to wish for the repose of the grave.

Abbadona at length recovering from his first emotions, softly cry'd, It is impossible—It is impossible—It cannot be—He die!—It is impossible. But why do I delay to obtain conviction? Then lifting up his eyes, he suddenly added, I see him—I am not deceiv'd—It is he!—Yes, it is he!—he whom I saw on the mount of Olives, prostrate, weeping, and pouring out his soul in prayer for man.

He now sunk upon the hill, and resum'd, Here will I in the dust wait the issue of this solemn tremendous scene, and if I may be permitted, will see the divine Sufferer die!—Ah, what is this that arises in my mind like the opening dawn of rest? Is it the stupefaction of anguish, or a ray of reviving hope?—of the best hope I dare entertain—the hope of annihilation? Oh deceive me not, thou mere ideal hope—Thou dost not—Thou art more than imaginary. Methinks I now dare fly to the Sovereign Judge, and humbly implore him to grant me annihilation! Ah now am I persuaded that he will hear me!—O Judge of the world! when the divine Sufferer shall have bow'd his head on the cross, and thou, to revenge our having brought forth sin, and seduc'd man to become guilty, shalt select some of us, as a sacrifice to be annihilated on the Saviour's grave, then choose Abbadona—choose me, the most ungrateful—the worst of sinners. Ah then I shall be no more!—No more shall feel the burning torment! Then at once will my existence cease! I shall be blotted from the race of immortal beings! be forgotten by the angels, by the whole creation, by God himself! Behold, I bow my head, O

Jehovah! to thine omnipotence; and do thou, my Sovereign Judge, condescend to exterminate me from thy creation by an invisible touch of thine almighty hand, or by subtile blaze darted from thy refulgent splendor.

Such were the supplications of Abbadona, which he presum'd to hope would be accomplish'd. Fill'd with mingled joy and terror, he glided along the earth, and look'd up to the bloody cross, to the dying Redeemer, and at every view he thought, Now, now the divine Sufferer dies! while a secret horror, at being reduc'd to nothing, insensibly arising in his mind, he shudder'd at destruction. Visible in obscurity he stood, striving to retain his borrow'd splendor. But while he thus strove, and his fears and terrors still return'd, he perceiv'd hovering on the right side of the more lofty cross, his belov'd, now his dreaded Abdiel, once his friend, his brother: for with him was he created. Surrounding gloom instantly veil'd from his sight the radiant circle of angels, and to him the whole creation appear'd too narrow. Every appertinence of an happy immortal, all the graces, all the powers of a fair ethereal spirit, he suddenly strove to assume, to prevent his being known to Abdiel; and hasting, as if dispatch'd on some high behests, from remote worlds to others more remote, he had stopp'd, but dar'd not stay; he thus, with quick speech, address'd himself to Abdiel.

Tell me, dear seraph, (for thou, perhaps, mayst know) when will the Saviour expire? I am order'd to be expeditious; yet, wherever I am, I could wish, with the lowliest adorations, to solemnize that important moment.

Abdiel, at hearing his voice, turn'd towards the unhappy, and, with a gravity soften'd by compassion, answer'd, Abbadona!—As the face of a blooming youth, blasted by a sulphurous flash darted from the clouds, is suddenly overspread by the livid paleness of death, so gloom issuing from the abyss, instantly cover'd the face of Abbadona. All the heavenly host beheld his hideous transformation. When, struck with fear and shame, he

suddenly flew, with rapidity, from the bright circle of the celestial spirits, unable to bear their looks or their splendor.

The fallen seraph ascended far into the sky, and then sank down on a hill, from the other side of which instantly appear'd a distressful spirit, far more black and deform'd than him who had fled. One of the bright inhabitants of Heaven seeing him, then said to his companion, Who is that wretch accurs'd advancing towards us from yonder hill? How has the hand of Justice branded his wrinkled front! How is he deform'd by odious guilt! Yet see, he presumes to fly towards this bright assembly!—But no longer, my dear associate, am I astonish'd—See, the mighty Obaddon is driving forward the wretched spirit. Ah, it is the ghost of the traitor!

Now the angel of death brought the trembling caitiff nearer to the cross; and all the celestials saw him so black, that he seem'd a spot in the darkness which encompass'd the globe. He appear'd as distress'd with agonizing terror, as if, wherever he flew, over him enkindling lightnings blaz'd, and under him the earth open'd, while that darted at his head avenging fires, and this, with equal fury, prepar'd to swallow him. Thus, with wild anguish, the soul of Judas approach'd the cross, with his eyes fix'd on Obaddon, who, waving in his right hand his flaming sword, drove him, reluctant; till, alighting on a sable cloud, he, with imperious voice, thus spake:

Behold, thou accurs'd, there lies Bethany—here the palace of Caiaphas—here below, the house where thou, ungrateful, didst partake of the memorials of the Saviour's death—There is Gethsemane—that is thy carcase—Dost thou tremble?—tremble still—but open not thy mouth in curses. Here, stretching out the flaming sword towards the middle cross, which rose pre-eminent, he added, That is Christ Jesus, once thy Lord!—He dies!—he dies for men! to sweeten their life, their death! to deliver them from torment like thine, and to exalt them

to the regions of eternal bliss! Those wounds, whence flows his redeeming blood, shall shine, with enrapturing lustre, when he comes to judge the world! Now turn aside, thou wretched spirit. Overwhelm'd with despair, Judas turn'd aside, and Obaddon quick reliev'd the angelic circle from a sight so hateful. They now wing their way among the stars. The traitor is terrify'd at the immense extent of the silent creation. The dread idea of the omnipresent God rushes upon his mind with all its terrors; and long he trembles before he dares to utter this request:

O thou most dreadful of the angels! let me entreat—let me implore thee not to carry me to the throne of the Eternal Judge—but, with that dread flaming sword, to put an end to my wretched being—

Obey, and be silent, said Obaddon, driving him forward, till at length, at his command, he stood on one of the suns, and near him that angel of death. There he shew'd the traitor the Heaven of Heavens, where the Most High visibly displays his glory, and the bless'd enraptur'd spirits enjoy the beatific vision. Though the throne of God was now encompass'd with sacred darkness, and, instead of eternal hallelujahs, and the triumphant joy of the saints, reign'd stillest silence, yet Heaven was still worthy of being the residence of Him who is the Author of all beauty, the Source of all perfection, and to the most exalted of the bless'd, was still the region of boundless joy, of ineffable felicity. This, said Obaddon to the wretched spirit, is the Heaven of the Most High God, the theatre on which he displays the most blissful manifestations of his exuberant glory, which he graciously imparts to those who make him the object of their grateful love. At present the Eternal hides his face from all finite beings, and sits shrouded on his throne in sacred obscurity: but still mine eyes perceive the divine glory. That celestial, that blooming mountain, is call'd Sion; upon its top, he who now dies for man will often shew himself, resplendent in grace, to those who, on earth, were his pious followers. Those

twelve golden thrones thou seest on Sion, shining like the sun in its splendor, were, by the august Rewarder of virtue, appointed for the twelve faithful disciples of the divine Jesus: and, seated on these, they shall one day judge the earth. Thou wast one of his disciples. That throne was thine. But thou hast forfeited the seat of bliss; and it will be given to another, more worthy. Sue not for destruction. Fruitless are all thy lamentations. Behold, so many of the celestial glories as thine eyes are able to discover, so many torments has God measur'd out to thee. In vain, feeble wretch, thou strivest to forbear looking up to Heaven. Learn to know the omnipotence of the Supreme Judge. Like a rock in the sea, which no storm can move, shalt thou here stand and contemplate, that Jesus Christ dies on the cross, to raise those who love him to this Heaven, to this state of unutterable glory.

At these words Obaddon left him, and flew up towards Heaven, till arriving at one of the celestial suns, he pray'd. At length, rising from his orisons, and returning to the traitor, who stood with wild gaze, fill'd with unutterable misery, he cry'd, Away, thou wicked spectre, I now lead thee to Hell, thine everlasting dwelling. Thus, with the hoarse voice of terror, sounding like redoubled claps of thunder, spake the angel of death, and then precipitated his flight down towards Hell. From afar they heard the noise of the infernal deep, which, roaring, struck the confines of the creation, and undulated to the nearest stars. In that space where God has set bounds to infinitude, Hell rolls her torrents of liquid fire. There no order submissive reigns above or below; no law of motion, swift or slow. Sometimes with unusual rapidity, they move: such is the command of the Sovereign Judge, to punish the fresh crimes of her inhabitants, with flames more vehement, and sharper darts of ever-dying death. Now with rageful patience, and hideous sound, mingled with groans, and yells, and shrieks, they flew up into the wide expanse. Meanwhile the traitor and his potent guide quit the confines of the fair

creation, and all the worlds innumerable, and, with extended wings, sink down to the gates of Hell. The angel of death station'd there knows Obaddon, sees the criminal writhing and struggling to escape, while the dread of the flaming sword forces his reluctant submission. He unfolds the wide adamantine gates, which, harsh grating with jarring sound, impetuous turn'd on their broad hinges, and at once discover'd the deep, the dread abyss, tremendous, and most horrible. Not mountains heap'd on mountains would fill up the enormous entrance: these would only render the passage more rugged. No path leads down to Hell's hideous deeps. Close by the gate, rocks cleft with gusts of liquid fire, fall down in ruins wild, while Dismay, pale and giddy at what is seen and heard, looks speechless down, with eyes wide staring, and face aghast, into the flaming gulph. The executioner of the divine vengeance, with the infernal Judas, stood at this gaping grave—the grave where Death never dies—never sleeps. The seraph then turning aside, pointed his flaming sword down into the deep abyss, and cry'd, This is the abode of the damn'd, and this, O wretch, is thine abode! That earth-born sinners might not suffer these torments, Jesus Christ, once thy gracious Lord, descended from heaven, liv'd a life of sorrow, breathing benevolence and love to man, and now is dying on the cross.

Thus he spake, and hurl'd the struggling spectre into the abyss. Then with rapidity soar'd from the precincts of the fiery deep, to the fair creation. Now he comes to the altar on which the divine victim was offer'd: near Golgotha he stands, waiting farther orders from the irritated Omnipotent.

END OF VOL. I.

Printed by Lane, Darling, & Co.
Leadenhall Street.